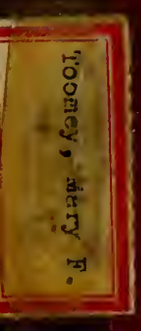

B O S T O N U N I V E R S I T Y

GRADUATE SCHOOL

THESIS

THE USE OF THE AMERICAN INDIAN IN AMERICAN LITERATURE TO 1890, WITH REFERENCE TO THE EASTERN STATES

by

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TOPICAL OUTLINE

Introduction

In this thesis I have endeavored to trace the use of the American Indian in American literature to the year 1890, referring in particular to the Eastern Indians in and around the New England states, New York, Virginia, and Pennsylvania, occasionally with references to that part of Canada near New York. I have limited the subject to this particular section of the country because the plethora of material would not permit a thorough investigation of the Indian's appearance in literature in other parts of the United States.

To accomplish my purpose, I have felt it necessary to set forth the historical background by the mentioning of the first-known occupants of America, the Mound-Builders, a type of Aboriginal Indian, and by the description of the invasion of their hunting ground by the White Man. Thus we get a picture of the circumstances which were to provide the background for the entrance of the American Indian into the literature of the white man.

I have endeavored to read the original texts of the earlier writings in every instance when they were available, and when they were not, I have referred to a library or encyclopedia of American literature. Throughout the thesis

I have included quotations from various authors in order that the reader might compare the different authors both in respect to style and content, and so that he might notice the gradual change in attitude toward the Indian from the Puritanistic to the humanitarian and the romantic.

As is necessary in a thesis of this type, I have put more emphasis on certain authors, either because they were representative of a type, or because the quality or importance of their work entitled them to a more minute analysis. This is especially true in the case of early historians.

I have referred also to various sources of critical writings about the phases which are discussed here, and, in certain cases, have given one or more opinions held by recognized authorities on certain questions. On the whole, however, I have intended that this thesis be more of a history, tracing the use of the Indian in literature rather than a critical evaluation of those usages, so that the reader can see for himself the important part the Indian has played in the discussed sections of American literature.

Chapter I

The Indian in his Native Background

The American Indian has always been a source of interest to writers endeavoring to picture vital elements which have flowed in the stream of American life, for the American Indian has come to be associated with the very beginning and core of things individually American. To those who looked for the romantic and unique side of the new lands, the Indian native, with all of his traditional customs and characteristics, supplied the picturesque element for the most part of our early literature. It is true, also, that the mention of him in literature was as important to the Indians as it was to the whites, for even as that part of literature which is devoted to the picturing of the redman has become an American tradition, the Indian himself has lived on because of it in the literature of a country that is fast crowding him out; and it is fitting indeed, that the former owners of our country should thus go down through the ages.

The earliest known occupants of our country are considered to have been Mound-Builders, so called from evidence of certain implements and mounds discovered. But they have always remained in the shadowy background because they have never had any effect on literature, the result being that theirs was almost as complete a disappearance from the earth as if they had been entirely swept from it. Yet, the Indians that we know were directly descended from these people.[1]

Peet Prehistoric America Volume I, Chapter I

The Indians were the unquestioned rulers of their unbounded territory until the white people began to move in on them. Naturally, the Indians resisted every step of the advance the whites made and they were finally overcome only by the power of superior numbers. In New England the English settlers especially became closely connected with the Indians, and from that time on, the two peoples were never to be completely isolated from each other. The nature of the life and the customs of the tribes, of course, were so different, as was everything else connected with them, that there was thus provided a truly romantic background for the historians chronicling the conquering and settling of this country.

There was very little work that the Indians themselves did in a literature of their own, most of what they did being found in a few love songs and hymns to the Great Spirit and stories about their warriors. There was also mention made of the elements; but on the whole, very little native Indian writing was present. According to one authority on the subject of early Indian verse, the lack of great Indian poetry may have been because of the social order in Indian civilization or a lack of discipline in individual life.[1]

Chapter II

Pocohontas

The first and most noteworthy appearance of the Indian in early American literature came during the settling of the

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Barnes, Nellie <u>American Indian Verse</u> pages 20-21

colonies, in the story of Pocohontas by Captain John Smith. This legend of the beautiful Indian maid is still today read by the American people. There has been, of course, much controversy as to the relative value of the story as such because of the realization that Smith was an egotist who sacrificed truth to interest and enjoyed exaggeration as a means of putting himself into the limelight. It is very probable that there may be a great deal of truth in this observation.[1] The story concerned the fact that while exploring the James River in 1907, Smith was captured and brought before the chief of a tribe of Indians. The chief's name was Powhatan. After a stay in the tribe, Smith was released and permitted to return home.[2]

The reason for most persons' questioning of the incident lies in the fact that when Smith published his first version of the adventure in 1608 in A True Relation, he omitted the telling of Pocohontas' part in the rescue. He told of Powhatan's questioning him about his exploring further up the river and of his replies to the Indian chief's questions. According to this version, Powhatan was very cordial to him and even invited him to inhabit a country called "Capa Howasche".

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1 Keiser The Indian in American Literature page 4

~~2 Stedman Library of American Literature page~~

He also told how he was given corn and other food and promised protection by the chief for as long as he lived there.[1]

In his later version of the story, which he published in 1624, he gave the same general description of the Indian chief as he sat on his high chair of state, surrounded by his attendants; but after this point, the two versions differ greatly. In this later account he tells how he was dragged out to lie on two big stones and would have had his brains dashed to pieces, if it had not been for the interference of Powhatan's daughter, Pocohontas, in his behalf. Pocohontas was pictured as the young and lovely savior of the white man, for the king then allowed him to live and had him make hatchets and beads before he sent him back to Jamestown. Smith describes his rescue thus in his General History, "Having feasted thus after their best barbarous manner they could, a long consultation was held, but the conclusion was, two great stones were brought before Powhatan; then as many as could laid hands on him -- dragged him to them and thereon laid his head, and being ready with their clubs, to beat out his brains, Pocohontas, the King's dearest daughter, when no entreaty could prevail, got his head in her arms, and laid her own upon his to save him from death; whereat the emperor was contented he should live to make him hatchets, and her bells, beads and copper."[2]

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1 Smith <u>A True Relation</u> page

2 Smith <u>General Historie of Virginia</u> pages 101, 102

But Pocohontas did not close her aid with this, for she urged her father to send aid and assistance to the starving colonists, thereby saving the settlers. Later Pocohontas was the means of having an important peace treaty settled after she had been lured aboard the ship of a certain Captain Argall on the pretence of seeing the vessel and then was prevented from leaving until the treaty had been agreed upon by Powhatan.[1]

It is this later version of the Pocohontas story that has come down to us, and most persons like to remember it as the romantic story of a dramatic rescue of a white man by a lovely Indian princess at a time when the whites were first becoming acquainted with the Indians. The story as such has been used innumerable times as the background for poems and dramas which were forthcoming at a later time. Among them, "The Indian Princess" by James Barker was perhaps the most well-known play, while "Pocohontas - a Legend" by Mrs. M. M. Webster immortalized Pocohontas in poetry. Of Pocohontas, Mrs. Webster speaks thus:

"But where is she the beauteous and the good
The Youthful empress of the forests wild.
The huntress bold, the dryad of the wood--
Noblesse of Nature and sweet Mercy's child
Could not some master touch have

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1 Smith Generall Historie of Virginia page 213

Turned the shell

A Scott, a Hermans, or a Campbell,

Aid Matoa's gentle sympathies to tell

Or raise a shrine to Pocohontas' shade--"[1]

Chapter III

Early Historians of Indians-Wars

The Whites became more acutely aware of the Indians when they got into difficulties over the actual possession of the land itself. In some regions the trouble became more ominous than in others, because some sections of the land did not appeal to the Indians so strongly as it did to the whites and in those sections, they did not resist the white man's advance so strongly.

In New England the trouble first became apparent. From the beginning the attitude of the Puritans had seemed to clash rather than harmonize with the Indian point of view, and the actual trouble came about in Connecticut when both peoples wanted the Connecticut Valley. The outcome of this trouble was the Pequot War which was really the climax of a great many smaller quarrels. After this war the land was lost to the Indians although they had fought bitterly.[2]

The importance of this war from the point of view of literature is that it resulted in the first of the written histories published in America by the colonists. A great

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1 Webster, Mrs. H.M. Pocohontas - a Legend page 14

2 Keiser Indian in American Literature page 11

many recordings were made of this affair, among which that written by Major John Mason, who participated in the war, was perhaps the most outstanding. According to his own story, Mason took a leading part in the struggle. He tells of the appearance of a few hundred English families who chose to settle in the Connecticut Valley. When some of them were murdered by the Indians, and matters came to a head, the court ordered that a force be sent against the Indians under Major Mason. Mason managed to get a tribe of Indians called the Mohigans to fight with him under their chief, Uncas, and on one day in a surprise attack before dawn, he came upon the Indians who were enjoying themselves in a fort. A slaughter followed in which hundreds of Indians were killed. In his history Mason says, "Such a dreadful terror did the Almighty let fall upon their spirits that they would fly from us and run into the very flames, and here many of them perished. And when the fort was thoroughly fired, command was given that all should fall off and surround the fort, which was readily attended by all. The fire was kindled on the North east side to windward which did greatly over run the fort to the extreme annoyance of the enemy, and the rejoicing of ourselves. Some of them climbed to the top of the palisade, others of them running into the very flames. Many of them gathering to windward, lay pelting at us with their arrows, and we repaid them

with our small shot. Others of stoutest issued forth, as we did guess, to the number of 40 who perished by the sword."[1]

Mason was truly Puritanistic in his viewpoint, and the view that he set forth in his writing was that it was pleasing to God to send the heathen people out in this manner, so that the children of God could live in peace. Thus ended the Pequot war and major warfare against the Indians until the times of King Philip's war which offered the early American historians the next opportunity to record a major strife.

Massassoit, the Wampanoag chief had been very friendly toward the whites, assisting them in many ways. When he died, however, his chiefdom descended to Philip after the death of the eldest son, Philip's brother. Upon the ascendency of Philip, matters changed, and he soon became a staunch and stubborn adversary of the white people and determined to get the land back into possession of the rightful owners. The bloody struggle which resulted from this is known as King Philip's War. Philip was, without a doubt, one of the most intelligent Indians of all times, and he foresaw the inevitable decline of the Indian. Thus, he worked for nine years preparing his forces and building together a great many tribes so as to present a solid and unbending front to the whites. He was one of the

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1. Mason History Pequot War pages 28-29

first of his people to realize the value of consolidation of the various tribes. In 1675 the war began and it lasted for two years. However, the Indians proved no match for the better trained and equipped colonists, so Philip was obliged to surrender ignominiously in a swamp where he was ambushed by Captain Church and was finally shot by an Indian. After his death, his body was cut into pieces by the colonists who thus avenged themselves on a man who was responsible for the death of as many as 800 white men.

The war with King Philip gave American literature its second great historian of Indian Wars in the person of the above mentioned Captain Benjamin Church. In his "History of King Philip's War", Church in his grim and resolute Puritan way, stated his great satisfaction as to the outcome of Philip's venture as right in the eyes of God, and says righteously, "So let Thine enemies perish, oh Lord." Describing Philip's capture and death he said, "They let him come fair within shot, and the Englishman's gun missing fire, he bid the Indian fire away, and he did so to the purpose; sent one musket bullet through his heart, and another not above two inches from it. He fell upon his face in the mud and the water, with his gun under him." Thus does Church, who became the first-hand historian of King Philip's War, as Major Mason did for the Pequot War, describe the death of his adversary.[1]

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1 Church <u>Entertaining History of King Philip's War</u> page 120

Captain Church, for the most part, confined himself to describing what he had seen, and he pictures it vividly, and without any hint of sympathy or feeling. For instance, speaking of the hacking of Philip's body, he wrote, setting down his own name quite formally as did Major Mason, "Captain Church then said that, for as much as he had caused many an Englishman's body to lie unburied, not one of his bones should be buried. And calling his old Indian executioner, bid him behead and quarter him. Accordingly, he came, with his hatchet, and stood over him, but before he struck, he made a small speech directing it to Philip and said, 'We had been a very great man and had many a man afraid of him, but so big as he was, he would now chop him to pieces.' And so he went to work and did as he was ordered."[1]

Although Philip is portrayed here as a cruel Indian without any noble traits, his many good qualities, were later portrayed by writers who began to romanticize his character and picture him more as a clever, noble Indian--cruel yes, but working for his people. This change of attitude may be seen later in plays and essays on the subject of King Philip's War, the famous essay by Irving being perhaps, the most well known.[2]

Another chronicler of King Philip's War was the Reverend William Hubbard who wrote in similar fashion, but whose work

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1 Church <u>Entertaining History of King Philip's War</u> pages 125, 126

2 Irving <u>Sketch Book</u> Philip of Pokanoket

is not considered by most authorities to be so dependable as that of Church. His Narrative of Troubles with the Indians in New England was published in 1677. This volume is important mostly because we see the rising importance of histories of Indian Affairs. Hubbard attempted to give a general treatment of Indian affairs and troubles rather than one particular part of it. Similar to this book in scope were two general histories, one by Samuel Penhallow, entitled Wars of New England with the Eastern Indians and that by Increase Mather, Relation of Troubles in New England from Earliest Settlement to the Present Time. Penhallow's book which was published in 1726 dealt with the relation of New England to other states and was published at a later date than any of the others we have mentioned.[1] Penhallow was also affected a great deal by the Puritanistic theories of his day, so that in his preface he says, "Though our merciful and gracious God did in a wonderful manner cast out heathen before our fathers and planted them; prepared also room before them and caused them to take deep root and to fill the land, so that the vine hath sent out her boughs onto the sea, and her branches upon the river; yet to humbly improve us and for our sins to punish us, the righteous God hath left us a sufficient number of the fierce and

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1 Cambridge History of American Literature Volume 1 pages 24, 25 editors Trent, Erskine, Sherman, Doren

barbarous savages on our borders, to be pricks in our ears and thorns in our sides, and they have been and are like the boar of the woods to mase us and the wild beast of the forest to devour us."[1] Later Penhollow wondered whether or not it might have been partly the fault of the whites that the Indians were such a scourge because the New England settlers had not cared for their souls as much as the people of the South had. Also he recalledthe remark of one of the chiefs in answer to the question of why they preferred the French to the English and the reply was, " the friars had taught them how to pray while the English never had."[2] Later we shall see authors who wrote to accomplish this very thing--to propagate the education and religious instruction of the Indians.

The first historical book written at the time with a more sympathetic attitude toward the Indian was that written by another historian of the time who was not so much touched by the ecclesiastical opinions of his time. He was Daniel Gookin who had moved to Massachusetts to escape the persecutions of Governor Berkeley and was made Superintendent of Indians in Massachusetts. He held an attitude toward the Indians which was surprising considering the attitude of the majority of his contemporaries. His viewpoint was more on the

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1 Penhallow <u>Wars of New England with the Eastern Indians</u> preface page 11

2 Ibid

humanitarian side, and he despised the type of vengeance which he saw the whites wreaking on the Indians while the latter in their ignorance were defending themselves in the only way they knew -- by barbarous methods. Sochin's point of view was, however, more advanced than his time, and it was not, therefore, generally accepted to the people.[1] In his two important books, Historical Collections of the Indians in New England and The Doings and Sufferings of the Christian Indians, the reader does not find the usual colu-blended overlooking of any feelings that may have been present in the Indian, but his writings showed, rather, a great deal of pity for them. In the Historical Collections of the Indians in New England, he attempted to trace the origin of the Indian of New England and concluded that all the Indians were originally of the same nation or sort of people. He says of it, "The color of their skins, the form and shape of their bodies, hair and eyes, demonstrate this. The skins are of a tawny color, not unlike the tawny Moors in Africa; the proportion of their limbs, all formed; it is rare to see a crooked person among them. Their hair is black and harsh, not curling; their eyes, black and dull; though I have seen, but very rarely among them, a grey eyed person with brownish hair."[2]

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1 Ellis, Pound, Sochn American Literature Volume I pages 46, 47

2 Stedman Library of American Literature Volume I page 464

He then goes on to discuss the origin of all Americans. Hookin, on the whole then, was interested in the Indian in regard to his customs, origin and manner of living. He was interested in him from a scientific and humanitarian point of view. Of their manner of worship, he says of the Indians of Natick especially, that they bore themselves with reverence, modesty, attention and solemnity, the men kind sitting together, and womenkind likewise according to age, quality and degree.[1]

Perhaps it would seem that the treatment of historians here has been confined too largely to New England authors, but as one authority states, "New England did not have the only Indian wars in America, but she alone had worthy historians of them."[2] Nevertheless, there was one outstanding historian of the Indians who was not a New Englander. He was Dr. Cadwallader Colden of New York and Philadelphia, who was interested chiefly in the Iroquois Indians about whom he wrote in the book entitled <u>The Five Indian Nations</u>. In this book, he collected a great deal of valuable information about that particular tribe. Although the Five Indian Nations refer to the Five Indian Nations of Canada, I consider it important that it be mentioned here because they were

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1 Stedman <u>Library of American Literature</u> Volume I pages 141-143

2 Trent, Erskine, Sherman Doren <u>Cambridge History American Literature</u> Volume I page 24

dependent on the province of New York, and Golden wrote concerning the advantage of their trade to the British Nation. Also he gives a brief history of the intercourse between the aborigines and the Europeans from the settlement of the country until the time that the book was published in 1727.[1]

To give another non New Englander credit for his truly noteworthy work, it would be necessary to mention Alexander Spotswood, capable and excellent governor of Virginia, who wrote concerning the Indian in Virginia in somewhat the same way that Gookin wrote about the Indian in Massachusetts. He was perhaps even more interested than Gookin in furthering the education of the Indian, for he was largely responsible for the establishing of a school for Indian children.

The bulk of his work is to be found in the "Official Letters of Alexander Spotswood". These letters have been included in the discussion here because they are typical of a body of literature concerning the Indian which urged his further education and christianization. In a letter addressed to the Bishop of London, he spoke of sending Indians to William and Mary College which had recently been founded. The Indians which he would send there were the sons of chiefs who would not only go forth as teachers to the rest of their

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1 Duyckunck and Duyckunck Encyclopedia of American Literature Volume I page 86

race, but who would in reality be hostages for their particular nation of Indians. By this method, Spotswood had hopes of converting the entire Indian nation in time.[1]

The final history[2] and historian[1] that we shall discuss here is Daniel Denton also a New Yorker, and his book A Brief Description of New York. In this document, in addition to the comments on the climate, the lists of commodities and descriptions of the people, he included, probably in answer to popular demand, a section entitled, "Likewise a brief relation of the customs of the Indians there". The statement that it was added because of popular demand may perhaps need a word of explanation here. After the appearance of the first histories of the Indian Wars, the settlers became eager to read any literature which nighttell of the customs and ways of living of the Indian. Because of this, a new body of literature on Indians was to appear. Since New York did not have the wars New England did, writers were able to observe their methods of living. The history by Daniel Denton was one of the most popular and long lasting.

Of the number of Indians living in the vicinity of New York he says, "There are but a few on the Island, and those few no ways hurtful, but rather serviceable to the

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1 Williams, Warfel American Mind page 77

English, and it is to be admired how strangely they have decreast by the hand of God since the English first settling of those parts".[1]

More specifically in describing their ways of living he said, "They live by hunting, fowling and fishing, their wives being the husbandmen to till the land and plant their corn. In their wars they fight no pitcht fields but when they have notice of an enemies' approach, they endeavor to secure their wives and children upon some island or in some thick swamp, and then with their guns, they way lay their enemies, some lying behind one, some another, and it is a great fight where seven or eight is slain."[2]

Describing their services for a dead warrior he wrote, "He is buried upright, sitting on a seat, with his gun, money, and such goods as he hath with him, that he may be furnished in the other world." In regard to mourners, "His nearest relations attend his hearse with faces painted black".[3]

Because people were interested in hearing how the Indian worshipped, Denton said, "For their worship, which is diabolical, it is performed usually but once or twice a year, unless on some extraordinary occasion as upon the making of war or the like. When they are all congregated,

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1	Denton	History of New York	page 45
2	ibid		page 48
3	ibid		

their priest tells them, if he wants money, their God will accept of no other offering, which the people believing, everyone gives according to their ability. The priest takes the money, and putting it into some dishes sets them upon the top of their low flat-roofed houses, and falls to invocating their God to come and receive it -- which with many a loud hallows and outcries, knocking themselves, is performed by the priest and seconded by the people."[1]

I have included here these descriptions by Denton because they represent well the type of writing on the Indian which was in demand at this time and because they were written by a man who had the opportunity to observe the Indians in a state where there was not so much fighting as in the New England states and by a man, too, who had a deep knowledge of the geographical conditions of the territory as well as a keen store of information about the inhabitants.

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1 Denton History of New York pages 46, 47

Chapter IV

Writings Concerning the Captivities

While the whites were fighting the Indians in open conflict, another type of warfare was begun by the Indians. This was the insidious raiding during which many white people were taken from their home never to be returned. Some of these unfortunate people were carried away into C Canada; othere, more fortunate, escaped after a bad time and wrote of their experiences. For the most part, these persons were not well educated, but they told their stories in plain and sincere language. Today a great number of personal accounts survive. These form a series of personal histories which, taken together, give a good picture of this phase of the relations of the whites and the Indians.

Mrs. Mary Rowlandson,who was captured in 1676 in Landcaster, Massachusetts told the story of her experiences in a small volume entitled,A Narrative of the Captivity and Restoration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson. In this account she gave an unusually vivid and graphic ~~account~~ relation of the customs of the Indians from what she saw during the time that she was a captive. As

was usual from the Puritan viewpoint, the Indian was pictured as the savage beast of the wilderness entirely pagan in his philosophy and actions.

She begins her narrative thus: "On the 10th of February 1675, came the Indians with great numbers upon Lancaster. Their first coming was about sunrising; hearing the voice of some guns we looked out; several houses were burning and the smoke ascending to heaven. There were five persons taken in one house -- the mother, father, and sucking child, they knocked on the head. The other two they took and carried away alive."[1]

Mrs. Rowlandson describes in a very interesting manner how she was carried about from place to place by the Indians. These wanderings she called her "removes". On her eighth remove she was taken to King Philip himself. On one occasion she said of an Indian war dance, "This was the dolefullest sight that my eyes ever saw. Oh, the roaring and singing and dancing and yelling of those black creatures in the night, which made the place a lively resemblance of hell."[2]

Nevertheless, strange as it may seem, Mrs. Rowlandson managed to return from her experiences alive, although her

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1 Stedman <u>Library of American Literature</u> Volume 2 Page 52

2 ibid Page 54

children and relatives were murdered before her eyes. This remarkable good fortune may have been due to the fact that the Indians admired her courage, for King Philip asked her to share a pipe with him, a sign of honor among the Indians.

Altogether, this little book proved an excellent one, for remembrance of this important phase of the white man's relation with the Indian.

Among other such books of literary importance which described this period, we have the story by John Williams called The Redeemed Captive, an honest, graphic account of his own experiences as a captive of the Indians. In his general introduction, he attributed the awful occurrences to the anger of God because of the actions of the people -- a typical Puritan attitude.

In his narrative he says, "On the 29th of February 1703, not long before the break of day, the enemy came in like a flood upon us; our watch being unfaithful -- an evil, whole awful effects, in a surprisal of our fort -- should bespeak all watchmen to avoid, as they should not bring the charge of blood upon themselves. They came to my house in the beginning of the onset, and by their violent endeavors to break open the doors and windows with axes and hatchets awakened me out of sleep."[1]

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1 Williams The Redeemed Captive pages 10, 11

Williams described with great vividness, a captivity during which his wife was slain. His narrative is similar to Mrs. Rowlandson's both in text and in viewpoint, and although both were inexperienced writers, because of the stark realism of their adventures, they have an extraordinarily clear style as can be seen from the foregoing quotations.

Another narrator of Indian captivities, who of all the many narrators ranks more nearly with Mrs. Rowlandson and John Williams, and whose work is important enough so that it might be well to mention it here, was Jonathan Dickenson. Dickenson wrote, Narrative of a Shipwreck in the Gulf of Florida in 1699. The result of the shipwreck was the capture of the party by a group of Indians who put them through the usual tortures. In describing these terrible ordeals, Dickenson describes as well the state of those Indians who inhabited Florida, thus making his work doubly important in literature.

The above three narrators of captivities I have selected from the great many who wrote in all sections of the country, because two of them were closely connected with the New England States, and in the case of Dickenson, the Eastern State of Florida.

Up to this point in the discussion of the use of the Indian in American literature, we have seen him pictured almost in the position of enemy to the white man. This is

due to the fact that most accounts have emphasized his war-like and bestial qualities. In the historical accounts he s seldom appears as a subject for prose cr poetry which would, in any sense, glorify him.

Chapter IV

Early Poetry and the Indian

The first man to use the Indian as a subject for poetry was Philip Freneau (1752-1832), who is considered to be the "Father ofAmerican Poetry" because he was the first American poet to choose truly American subjects as material for his poems, and because he is considered to have possessed the " first essential poetic spirit in America."[1]

Freneau was of French parentage and lived during life in the small French village of La Chapelle in New York. After a good education at preparatory schools where he obtained a knowledge of the English poets and classics, he entered Princeton where he was to evince a great deal of creative talent.

Resulting perhaps from his French parentage, Freneau had a tendency toward the naturalistic theories of the 18th century. He leaned toward the Rousseauistic conception of beauty in nature as Godlike and coupled it to a humanitarian viewpoint. It was thus that the Indian had a great appeal

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1. E.C.Stedman Poets of America page 35

for Freneau because he represented man away from the effects of institutions and in his best free form according to the "back to nature" ideal of the Rousseau theory.[1] This theory is encompassed in the following stanza of a poem from the "Pictures of Columbus."

"No! leave the mind unchained and free
And what they ought, mankind will be,
No hypocrite, no lurking fiend
No artist to some evil end,
But good and great, benign and just,
As God and nature made their first."[2]

In an early poem of Freneau's entitled "The American Village," we get a picture of the noble savage as the exponent of the natural state and then a change in him to a cruel state because of his reaction to the invaders of his territory. But as Freneau pictures him, never once does the Indian lose his nobility even when he is pictured in his murdering state as seen below:

"Nor think this mighty land of old contained
The plund'ring wretch, or man of bloody mind,
Renowned Sachems, once their empire rais'd
On wholesome laws and sacrifices blaz'd,
The gen'rous soul inspired the honest breast,
And to be free, was doubly to be blest:

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1 Clark, H Poems of Freneau page 1,2
2 ibid page 166

'Till the east winds did here Columbus blow.
And wond'ring nations saw his canvas flow.
'Til here Cabot descended on the strand,
And hail'd the beauties of the unknown land;
And now rav'nous nations with industrious toil,
Conspired to rob them of their native soil;
Then bloody wars, and death and rage arose,
And every tribe resolv'd to be our foes
Full many a feat of them I could rehearse
And actions worthy of immortal verse:
Deeds ever glorious to the Indian name."[1]

Again Freneau has something to say about the Indians' wild domain before the invaders came, in his "Pictures of Columbus", a poem divided into various numbered pictures concerning the voyage and landing of Columbus. In Picture XlV Columbus representing a lover of nature says:

"In these green groves who would not wish to stay
Where guardian nature holds her quiet reign"

and again:

Sweet sylvan scenes of innocence and ease,
How calm and joyous pass the seasons here
No splendid towns or spiry turrets rise
No lordly palaces--no tyrant kings

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1 Clark Poems of Freneau page 211

Enact hard laws laws to crush their freedom here;
No gloomy jails to shut up wretched men;
All, all are free! Here God and nature reign
Their works unsullied by the hands of men.[1]

Their view of the Indians is given through a comment made by a member of the crew:

"In tracing o'er the isle no gold I find
Nought else but barren trees and craggy rocks
Where screaming sea-fowl mix their odious loves
And fields of burning marle where devils play
And men with copper skins talk barbarously
What merit has our chief in sailing hither
Discovering countries of no real worth?"[2]

In another type of poem on the Indian we get the Indian's reaction toward the advent of the white men. A typical poem is "The Prophecy of King Tammany" in which we find the reaction of a chief toward the invaders:

"The Indian chief who, fam'd of yore
Saw Europe's sons adventuring here,
Look'd sorrowing to the crowded shore
And sighing dropt a tear!

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1 Clark Poems of Freneau pages 254, 255
2 ibid pages 253, 554

He saw them half his world explore,
He saw their hostile ranks display'd
And cannons blazing through that shade
Where only peace was known before."[1]

and describing the rising anger of the chief:

"What have we done, great patrons say
That strangers seize our woods away,
And drive us naked from our native plain.
Rage and revenge inspire my soul
And passion burns without control;"[2]

Later as he saw the Indian opposition to no avail and the invaders successful, he makes a dark prophecy:

"Even now the thundering peals draw nigh, --
'Tis theirs to triumph, ours to die!
But mark me, Christian, ere I go --
Thou, too, shalt have thy share of woe,
The time rolls on, not moving slow,
When hostile squadrons for your blood shall come
And ravage all your share."[3]

Thus Freneau pictures splendidly what, up to now, was

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1 Clark Poems of Freneau page 326
2 ibid page 326
3 ibid page 327

a somewhat overlooked factor, the indignant feelings of the Indians whose rightful possessions were being invaded.

In "The Dying Indian" Freneau confirms the love of the Indian for his land, a love that made him fight so relentlessly and fearlessly to hold on to it. Tomo Chequee, the dying Indian hated to exchange his beautiful home for the uncertain land which lay before him. Speaking with sadness of what he must leave behind he says,

"I leave my woods, I leave the Huron shore,
For emptier groves below!
Ye charming solitudes,
Ye ascending woods,
Ye glossy lakes and prattling streams,
Whose aspect still was sweet,
Whether the sun did greet,
Or the pale moon embraced you with her beams --
Adieu to all!
To all that charmed me here I strayed,
The winding stream, the dark sequestered shade;
Adieu to all triumphs here!
Adieu to the mountains' lofty swell,
Adieu, thou little verdant hill,
And seas, and stars, and skies -- farewell,
For some greater sphere --"[1]

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1 Clark Poems of Freneau page

Another of the Indian death songs entitled "The Indian Burial Ground" is, without doubt, the finest of the short poems by Freneau.[1] Here there is an acknowledged poetic delicacy so beautiful and a suggestion of thoughts so well done by the poet, that the English poet, Campbell, borrowed part of it. It describes the position of the Indian dead and refers to the North American Indian's custom of burying the dead in a sitting position and the warrior with his military weapons.

"His bow for action ready bent
And arrow, with a head of stone,
And only mean that life is spent
And not the old ideas gone

Thou, strange that shalt come this way
No fraud upon the dead commit
Observe the swelling turf and say
They do not lie but here they sit

Here still a lofty rock remains
On which the curious eye may trace
Now wasted, half, by wearing rains
The faencies of a ruder race

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1 Reiser Indian in Literature page 29

By midnight moons, o'er moistened leaves,
In habit for the chase arranged
The hunter still the deer pursues
The hunters and the deer, a shade."[1]

The preference of the Indian for his hunting grounds and forest domain to any education the white man could give him is shown in "The Indian Student" also called "Race of Nature". This poem depicts a fine intelligent Indian lad who went to Harvard College where he painfully studied Latin grammar during the long and tiresome hours, hunting when he could during his spare time until finally he could stand it not longer and cried,

"And why (he cried) did I forsake
My native wood for gloomy walls:
The silver stream, the limpid lake
For musty books and college halls.

Let seraphs gain the bright abode,
And heaven's sublimest mansions see
I only bow to Nature's God --
The land of shades will do for me."[2]

Although Freneau in addition to his poetic work, also

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1 Clark Poems of Frenaeu page 356
2 ibid pages 358, 359

also tried his hand at prose and wrote a series called, "Tomo-Cheeki, the Creek Indian in Philadelphia" in which he critizes the American from the Indian viewpoint, he was not so successful here as in his poetry, for it was in his poetry that he captured the simplicity and delicacy of feeling that pervaded his portrayal of the Indian.

Chapter VI

The Native Native Appears in Fiction

Up to the last half of the 18th century, the Indian's appearance in prose has been confined for the most part to true, first-hand accounts of his actions as they affected the white man. We have seen the histories which followed the early battles with the Indians. These, added to the stories of the French and Indian Wars, served to increase curiosity and excitement over Indian customs. In answer to the growing popular demand for writings on the Indians, books were brought out describing Indian superstitions, customs and ways of living. It is these latter books which form the transit from historical writings to those which portrayed the Indian entirely from a fictional standpoint. Thus short stories and articles began to appear in the last half of the 18th century.

Among the first of these short stories was one which appeared in 1793 called "The History of Maria Kittle".

written by Mrs. Eliza Bleeker. This story was based upon what she herself saw, heard, and experienced during the period when Indian captivities were frequent. A native of New York, Mrs. Bleeker herself had been forced to flee her rural home during the absence of her husband when an Indian raid occurred. She was obliged to walk five or six miles before she was finally taken in by friends. Later her husband was captured by Indians from Canada.[1]

The "History of Maria Kittle" was included in a letter to Miss Ten Byck and was originally published in volume I and II of The New York Magazine or Literary Repository according to Fullerton.[2] This story has as its background the French and Indian Wars and was interesting also for the remarkable information it contained of Indian customs and manners. The story itself concerned a sudden attack by the Indians in which they killed are members of a particular family with the exception of old Mrs. Kittle whom one Indian had promised to save and who was thence taken by him to Canada.

Mrs. Bleeker wrote of the Indian as she saw him, in character merciless and cruel, bloodthirsty and untrustworthy. Untrustworthy because, as she pictured it in her story, the

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1 Fullerton, B. M. Selected Bibliography of American Literature page 26

2 ibid page 27

family murdered by the Indians had previously been on friendly terms with them.

Of this particular work, although it is rightly called by one authority Mrs. Bleeker's most important work and indeed remarkable for its time,[1] I agree with Keiser when he says that, "though not lacking in some vivid passages, this ambitious tale, like so many other attempts, has little literary significance."[2]

Mrs. Bleeker wrote poetry also, and although she was not very successful here, it illustrates well her conception of the savage.

"Late indeed, the cruel savage
  Here with looks ferocious stood;
Here the rustics cot did ravage,
  Stain'd the grass with human blood."[3]

With the advent of Charles Brockden Brown in the first half of the 19th century, we have an author who recognized the wealth of native material awaiting fictionization. As a result, he became the first significant figure in the history of American fiction as well as the first professional literary

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1 Fullerton Selected Bibliography of American Literature Page 26

2 Keiser Indian in American Literature

3 Duyckunck Cyclopedia of American Literature Volume I Page 381

man in America. Brown, of Quaker stock, was born in Philadelphia in 1771, and early showed signs of his preocity. At the age of sixteen, he considered writing three epics and subsequently injured his health by study. Later, due probably to the effects of the revolution, he developed a Godwinian philosophy and view of life.

It was chiefly in the novel, Edgar Huntley, that Brown made the most use of the background with which he was familiar. In his preface to that particular novel he says, "America has opened new views to the naturalist and politician--The sources of amusement of the fancy and instruction to the heart that are peculiar to ourselves, are equally numerous and inexhaustible. It is the purpose of this work to profit by some of these sources; to exhibit a series of adventures growing out of the conditions of our country."[1] Mentioning that Gothic settings are usually used as the setting for a novel such as his he says, "the incidents of Indian hostility and the perils of the Western Wilderness are far more suitable.[2] Brown indeed stuck to this decision for the background for his novel, Edgar Huntley, is the dark wilderness of Pennsylvania.

The Story of Edgar Huntley or the Memoirs of a Sleepwalker

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1 Brown Edgar Huntley page 3

2 ibid page 4

concerns the experiences of the hero, Edgar, whose parents had been murdered in an Indian raid. Throughout the book Edgar looks upon them as wild beasts of the forest. In regard to his experience he says, probably voicing Brown's sentiments, "Most men are, for the most part, able to trace back to some incident which befell them in their early years. -- You will not be surprised that after the fate of my parents, I never looked upon or called up the image of a savage without shuddering."[1] His feeling of terror is, however, tinged with a feeling with a feeling of awe at their great strength, for he says at one time, "I now gained a view of four brawny and terrific figures stretched out on the ground.[2] Edgar's attitude toward the Indian reflects Brown's own toward the savage, for he himself had witnessed many Indian raids, and had had a narrow escape from death during one.[3] It was only natural then for him to look upon the Indian with the combined feelings of terror and awe, picturing him at the same time as a murdering beast, of magnificent proportions, ruled by the lust for blood. Thus it was with tremendous vividness that he described a scene in the novel just after an Indian raid had occurred. A score of bloody,

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1 Brown <u>Edgar Huntley</u> page 157

2 ibid page 156

3 Dunlap Biography of Charles B. Brown Volume II page 20

scalped corpses lay strewn about, and razed houses stood smouldering in their ashes.

One of the principal characters in the book is an old Indian hag who is called "Deb". She represents the embittered Indian refusing to admit the white man's occupation of his land. "Deb" remained in her hut long after the other members of her tribe had left and demanded the government of her land and the absolute respect of all residing in it. Then, whenever a group or even one of her tribesmen appeared, she, by her depredatory remarks was responsible for the inciting of them to murderous Indian raids. "Deb" is pictured by Brown as a fierce acting old hag terrifying and without a single relieving attribute.

Thus Brown in his treatment of the Indian, incorporated with a fear for them a feeling of wonder at their strength and ferocity.

The next two literary works which attracted considerable attention by their fictionization of the Indian in the first half of the 19th century were written by three young people, two of whom were under the age of twenty, and a third who had barely passed it. The first two were James W. Eastburn and Robert C. Sands, co-authors of "Yamoyden" a poem published in 1820 and based on the wars of King Philip. The other was Lydia Francis Child author of Hobomok, A Tale of Early Times,

published in 1824.

"Yamoyden", although a poem, I shall include in this chapter, because it was a tale which fictionized the Indian in verse. The two young authors used as a background for the poem the Reverend William Hubbard's version of the Wars of King Philip. It is my opinion that Eastburn, who was himself preparing at that time for the ministry, wisely chose a history written by an ecclesiastic, although it undoubtedly contained a great many errors.

"Yamoyden", the hero of the story, was a young Christian Indian chief whose Christian wife, Nora, influenced him not to shed the blood of the white men. Philip, in order to stir up Yamoyden to enter into battle against the whites, plotted to steal his wife and child, thus working Yamoyden up to an emotional state where he could easily be persuaded to fight with Philip and seek vengeance on the whites.

An entirely new point of view is introduced into this poem, for although Philip's method might be condemned as cruel, nevertheless his purpose is ennobled, and, in a manner of speaking, the end justified the means. Philip is represented as a great and fearless leader of his people, truly interested in his seeking of liberty and justice for them. The Indians are for the first time represented entirely from an unsympathetic white point and are actually condemned

for their unjust actions and attitude toward the Indians. Uncas is finally killed by the whites before the girls' eyes just as the tale ends--the hero dying a martyr for a noble cause.

"Wamsyden" has its importance chiefly because its great popularity influenced the viewpoint of the use of the Indian in fiction--so much so that it drew an unqualified vote of praise from Dr. Palfrey, who in an article in the North American Review stated that he was glad at last people were beginning to realize the wealth of material the early history of America presented--especially the history of New England. Of the Indians he said that with their inconsistent personalities, courageous feats, and superstitious lives, they had a just place in poetry.[1]

It is noteworthy that this article was to have far-reaching effects and some immediate results. One of those who was inspired by the reviewer's words was Lydia Francis Child, the author of Hobomok, a Tale of Early Times. This novel, published in 1824, dealt with the early days of the Puritan settlement. Mrs. Child was also to have the distinction of being one of the very first successful women writers. Hobomok, her first novel, written when she was twenty-two, started the Indian on the road to idealization.

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[1] Palfrey, Review of Wamsyden, North American Review pages [illegible]-285

The Indians when she wrote Last were viewed from the point of realism and were, in the other hand, entirely fictionalized and portrayed from a romantic point of view. Nevertheless, her imaginative treatment of the native was perhaps the beginning of a new era.

The plot of Nobonob concerned the adventures of an Indian chief by that name, who was a perfect specimen of a noble Indian without any marvelous or proud traits. He resided with the whites and had adopted many of their ways. Later he married Mary Conant, a white girl, whose husband had supposedly been lost at sea. Nobonob unselfishly aided her and their little son and later when the lost husband returned, Nobonob unselfishly disappeared, never to be heard from again.

The absolute unreality of the plot may unquestionably be seen, but, from an imaginative standpoint, this novel was indeed an important one.

Chapter VII

Concerning the Delaware Indians, Pennsylvania, and James K. Paulding

Pennsylvania was fortunate in that it was founded by William Penn and its government directed by him, for he, rightly called "the Great God", dealt with the Indians with remarkable tact and foresight.

Among the tribes indigenous to this area were the Delawares and Iroquois Indians whom Cooper was to deal with later. It was with these and others that Penn was to conclude his memorable treaty in 1682 saying, "We will be as one heart, one head, and body; that if one suffers, the other suffers, that if anything changes the one, it changes the other. We will go along the broad pathway of good will to each other together." The bargain was sealed by an exchange of presents. In a written statement Penn ordered that several articles be included in the laws relating to the treatment of Indians by white settlers in that area. These protected the Indian both in trade and in law.[1]

The Indians are described by Keyser, who wrote in 1882, as appearing at the meeting in full regalia "black to darkness by their ruder intercourse with the weather, gorgeous with various dyes upon their persons, feathers of the forest birds upon their foreheads, shimmering in the Autumn sun."[2]

A great deal of Pennsylvania's literature dealt with the relationship of the Indian and the white, not describing wars or raids, but telling of customs, laws, and improved relationship. Penn himself did a great deal of miscellaneous

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1 Keyser Penn's Treaty with the Indians page 9

2 ibid page 5

writing concerning his dealing with the natives. He wrote a series of letters to the Committee of Society of Free Traders in London, in which he described the natives in part, in his straight forward Quaker style, "The Natives I shall consider in their Persons, Language, Manners, Religion, and Government. For their persons, they are generally tall, straight, well-built and of singular proportion; they tread strong and clever, and mostly walk with a lofty Chin; of Complexion, black, but by design as the gypsies in England; they grease themselves with Bears' fat clarified, and using no defense against the Sun or Weather, their skins must needs be swarthy: their Eye is little and black, not unlike a straight-look's Jew. The thick lip and flat Nose so frequent to the East Indians and Blacks are not common to them." [1]

Describing their customs he says, "If a European comes to see them, of calls for Lodging at their House or Wigwam, they give him the best place and first cut. If they come to us, they salute us with an "Itah" which is to say, "God be with you," and set them down, which is mostly on the Ground, close to their Heels, their Legs upright; may be they speak not a word more, but observe all passages."[2]

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1 Penn A Letter from William Penn to Commission of Society of Free Traders 1683 page 5

2 ibid

Penn also made mention of his neighbors, the Swedish settlers on the Delaware. The Swedes in some cases ran into difficulties with the Indians when the latter on occasion raided their cattle.

A writer who rose at this time to use this background in a novel was James Kirke Paulding, who was perhaps the most truly representative of the New American fiction writers, and one truly imbued with the love for native America. Probably best remembered for the collaboration with Irving in the writing of the "Salmagundi" papers, Paulding, nevertheless, wrote several lasting novels among which was Koningsmarke, the Long Finne, --a story of the New World--which dealt with the Indians of Pennsylvania and the Swedish settlers on the Delaware.

The story, written in humorous, realistic vein, presents a satirical portrayal of Governor Peter Piper's court. Christina, the governor's daughter, is in love with The Long Finne who has been jailed for treason after a comical court session. A quarrel with the Indians over hunting and fishing rights results in a horrible Indian raid, where both Christina and the Long Finne are captured. Prisoners in an Indian camp, they are finally saved by Deer Eyes, an Indian maiden, who resembles Pocohontas. At last, a group of William Penn's men appear and manage to

soothe them by gifts so that the captives are returned.

Paulding's description of the bloody Indian raid on the town leaves no doubt as to his realization that the Indian was a murderous creature whose cruelty, once provoked, knew no bounds. This is provedby the terrible treatment of Claas Tomeson and Councilor Verlett. By no means, however, was Paulding's description of the Indian limited to a portrayal of his cruelty. He also recognized the best qualities of the Indian which were brought into view by Lenn's kindness. Paulding recognized them first of all as uncivilized beings who reacted to kindness and gentleness as animals might but who, once crossed, knew no limit in their revenge. Thus this author had an advanced and comprehensive view of the situation and was not hampered by an ecclesiastical viewpoint as court in earlier New England authors were.

Chapter VIII

Washington Irving, Essayist and Idealizer of the Indian

Washington Irving, collaborator with James K. Spaulding and essayist superlative, was born in New York in 1783.

His genial interest in his surroundings and in all things American evinced itself in his many famous essays. In two of these essays from the Sketch Book we get his view of the local Indian native. In answer to popular demand, Irving also wrote a great deal about the Western Indians after he had made a trip across the prairies, but it is not with these Indians that this thesis is concerned.

Irving's familiarity with the Indians was limited to an acquaintance with Indian trade with the Dutch on the Hudson. What he learned here about their personal traits he supplemented with information which he gained by diligent study of earlier books written about them. Although he never utilized this material in fiction, nevertheless, his essays remain as the best examples to which Indian material was put, for he incorporated with it, other little sketches of early American life which endeared him to all of his readers. It is this type of work which endures, because it has an everlasting appeal.

In the essay, "Traits of Indian Character," Irving in keen observation says of the savage, "He is formed for the wilderness, as the Arab is for the desert. His nature is stern, simple, and enduring, fitted to grapple with difficulties and to support privations. There seems to be but little room in his heart for the support of kindly

virtue; and yet, if we would but take the trouble to penetrate through that proud stoicism and habitual taciturnity which locks up his character from casual observation, we should find him linked to his fellowmen of civilized life by more of those sympathies and affections than are usually ascribed to him."[1]

Irving declared that the lot of the native had been a hard one, for he had been wronged by the white men at every point. We saw the fault in the white man that he would rather treat the Indian as a wild beast of the forest and kill him than to take the trouble to civilize him. We scorned the way the white man had taken advantage of the Indian's ignorance in matters of trade.

Irving granted that certain corrupt hordes of Indians were apt to influence people to the wrong conception of the Indian character, for they were, he said, not the majority, but the exception. They were rather the pitiful examples of beings corrupted by the vices of society and not benefited in any way by it. With this motley crew, he compares the state of the Indian when he was the lord and master of the soil.

Concerning other writers on Indian life, Irving complained that they were imbued with prejudice and

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1 Irving Sketch Book pages 326, 11, 7-16

inclined to exaggeration instead of keeping in mind a true philosophy and sufficient consideration of the natural Indian state of life.

Among several of the most common grounds for accusation against the Indians, Irving answers the one of treachery and disregard of treaties with the statement that the Indians were seldom treated with the whole-hearted confidence and frankness indispensable to real friendship. This, he claimed, was just grounds for Indian hostility peculiar to the Indian character. As an example of this, he sets forth an incident at Plymouth where the planters had plundered the grave of a sachem's mother and had robbed it of furs and other ornaments. Thus Irving points out that very often the Indian had due cause to excite his hostility.

Speaking of the barbarity of the Indian toward his captive, Irving logically points out that this trait had itsorigin in early Indian days when one formidable Indian tribe,defeated by another, had to be wiped out to insure future security. In addition to this, Irving sets forth the fact that Indian cruelty had been goaded to madness and despair by injustices suffered at the hands of the white man.

In regard to Indian strategem in warfare, Irving justifies that by their code of honor. Since they were early taught that strategem is praiseworthy and honorable, is it

any wonder that they seek to take advantage of the foe? He dismisses strategem as a form of cowardice with the pointing out of Indian fortitude and courage in the face of pain and death. To prove this Irving sets forth as an example an incident which occurred during King Philip's war when an Indian fort was surprised in the night and all occupants burned out or shot down without mercy--refusing to ask mercy and preferring death to submission.

Thus in this essay Irving excites our sympathy for the hapless Indian and ends his paper by saying prophetically, "They will vanish like a vapor from the face of the earth, their very history will be lost in forgetfulness---and the places that now know them will know them no more forever."[1]

Speaking of posterity's views of them through one of their poets, "Should he tell how they were invaded, corrupted, despoiled, driven from their native abodes and sepulchres of their fathers; hunted like wild beasts about the earth, and sent down with violence and butchery to the grave, posterity will either turn with horror and incredulity from the tale, or blush with indignation

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1 Irving Sketch Book pages 208, 11,26-28

at the inhumanity of their forefathers."[1]

In the second of his essays, "Philip of Pokanoket" our interest is aroused because we see Philip for the first time in prose glorified as a hero and martyr for his people's cause. The writing of this essay was inspired by the reading of an early colonial volume of Indian outrages. Instead of being filled with a hatred for the savage, Irving was overcome by the fact of how easily the colonists were moved by the lust for conquest.

In writing his version of the tale of Philip, Irving describes again the ruthlessness of the colonists in the burning of Indian wigwams until one colonist wondered whether it could be consistent with humanity and the benevolent principles of the gospel. He emphasized how Philip was goaded into action by the treatment of his subjects and friends, and waged a desperate effort to recover what his people had lost--a battle that ended in his ignominious death in a swamp.

Irving praised the genius of Philip in consolidating the many Indian tribes and his prowess as a leader. Of Philip's character Irving says, "He was a patriot attached to his native soil--a prince true to his

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1 Irving Sketch Book pages 238, 11, 1-7

subjects and indignant of their wrongs--a soldier daring in battle, firm in adversity, patient of fatigue, of hunger, of every variety of bodily suffering and ready to perish in the cause he had espoused."[1]

Irving was unquestionably romanticizing the Indian and looking at him from a sentimental angle. He, nevertheless, possessed in common with William Penn, a kindly forebearance and philosophical outlook. Whether Irving would have been as successful as Penn in actual deslings with the Indians is a matter for speculation, for his own relationship with them was slight and at a time when the real Indian opposition had died down. Regardless of his own outlook on the matter, Irving's actual factual material is always unquestionable because of his careful reference to all sources.

Of his own two essays that have been discussed here, Keiser says, "They were inspired by the romantic enthusiasm for the primitive tribes prevalent in those days." Whereas the traits with which he endowed the Indian were opinions "which closer contact hardly upheld."[2] In any case Irving has done as much to immortalize the American Indian as any other writer.

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1 Irving Sketch Book page 359

2 Keiser Indian in American Literature page 52

Chapter IX

The Use of the Indian in Drama

Indian drama in America did not appear in the main until the first half of the 19th century, although a few instances of it were available in the latter part of the 18th century. Although at that time, Indian drama became an important part of American drama, lasting for as long as thirty years, after that the Indian gradually disappeared from the stage, leaving only a few out of the many which had been written to endure. This seemingly strange fact is due in most part to the poor portrayal of the Indian on the stage. Merely was he presented in his true colors, but for the most part as a socialized being. There was, however, one excellent portrayal of the Indian, a characterization done by Edwin Forrest, a powerful actor who brought the play "Metamora" to great success on the stage.

The Indian dramas may be placed in two general categories--plays based on the histories of Indian battles--and dramas concerned with the story of Pocohontas.

In considering the earliest reference to the Indian in drama, Quinn mentions an anonymous piece of work printed in Philadelphia in 1764, which was entitled,

The Paxton Boys.[1] It concerned those settlers who came to Philadelphia to demand protection against the Indians, and also it contrasted the viewpoints of the Presbyterians, Quakers, and Episcopalians. This piece of work was, however, of very little literary value.

In 1766 there appeared Ponteach, a drama written in blank verse by Major Robert Rogers. This drama dealt with the savages in America in regard to their relationship with the whites and may well be considered the first important appearance of the American Indian in drama. This play has also been called by Moses, our first problem play. He praised it by saying that it contained a dignity in the drawing of the main character, a subtle humor in the delineation of the English characters as well as a dignity of diction which was striking and which gave the play its literary value.[2]

Rogers, who was born in New Hampshire in 1727, was familiar with the Indians, for as a boy, he experienced Indian raids, and as a soldier in the French and Indian wars he commanded a company known as Roger's Rangers.

The problem set forth in Ponteach was the familiar

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1 See Quinn History of American Drama page 28

2 Moses, M Representative American Plays pages 113,114

one existing between the Indian tradesman and the settler. The white man is condemned as being for the most part to blame, for the attitude of the mercenary white traders is expressed by one of them, a character in the play, who says,

"Our fundamental maxim is this
That it's no crime to cheat and gull an Indian."[1]

This view Rogers answers in the words of another trader

"How! not a Sin to cheat an Indian say you?
Are they not men? Haven't they a right to Justice
As well as we, though savage in their manner?"[2]

He then goes on with a plot which brings out the white's mistreatment of the Indian, although a large part of the play concerns the jealousy of Ponteach's sons as to which of them will be his father's heir. The tragic end, however, finds the Indian chieftain and his sons dead -- after the author has described a scene of terrible torture which the Indians inflict on a captured trader.

In picturing the Indian, Rogers has striven to portray him faithfully from his own extensive experiences. Sympathetically he deals with the Indians' side of the case and shows the vengeance they inflict as something which they are goaded into. One Indian prince speaking of the English says,

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1 Moses, M Representative American Plays page 118
2 ibid

"Would you compare an Indian Prince to those
Whose trade it is to cheat, deceive and flatter?
Who rarely speak the meaning of their hearts?
Whose Tongues are full of Promises and Vows."[1]

It is interesting to note here that the author of the above play was himself made the hero of a drama by General Alexander Macomb, also a soldier in the French and Indian Wars, and who based his play on that historical affair. His play, entitled: A Drama of Pontiac appeared in 1835. This drama was also sympathetic to the native, condemning the lack of misunderstanding of the whites for the Indians. Macomb received popular acclaim for his work, although in Keiser's opinion, it had considerably less merit than its predecessor.[2]

Although the next Indian drama did not appear until 1808, an interesting Indian song appeared in the play The Contrast produced in 1799 by the popular dramatist Royal Tyler. The song was given by Maria, one of the leading characters at the beginning of Scene 11, Act 11, and because of the interesting view it gives of Indian stoicism, I have quoted it entirely.

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1 Moses Representative American Plays page 156
2 Keiser Indian in American Literature page 70

I

The sun sets in night, and the stars shun the day;
But glory remains when their lights fade away!
Begin, ye tormenters! Your threats are in vain,
For the son of Alknomook shall never complain.

II

Remember the arrows he shot from his bow;
Remember your chief by his hatchet laid low:
Why so slow? - do you wait till I shrink from the pain?
No - the son of Alknomook will never complain.

III

Remember the wood where in ambush we lay,
And the scalps which we bore from your nation away:
Now the flame rises fast, you exult in my pain;
But the son of Alknomook can never complain.

IV

I go to the land where my father is gone;
His ghost shall rejoice in the fame of his son:
Death comes like a friend, he relieves me from pain;
And thy son, oh Alknomook! has scorned to complain.[1]

Concluding the song, Maria says of courage, "It displays something so noble, so exalted, that even in despite of the prejudices of education, I cannot but admire it even in

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1 Halline <u>American Plays</u> pages 13,14

a drama."[1] The authorship of this song of Alnomook is uncertain, some authorities crediting it to Tyler himself and others to Freneau who was writing at that time.

According to the Cambridge History of American Literature, the series of plays concerning Pocahontas, John Rolfe, and John Smith, is one of the most important of all the types. The best of these according to the history are The Indian Princess by Barker 1808, Pocahontas by Charlotte Barnes 1848.[2] Quinn goes even further in saying that, "The Pocahontas series contains easily the best of the plays concerning the North American Indian."[3]

James Nelson Barker, a native of Philadelphia, wrote The Indian Princess, or La Belle Sauvage - which was the first Indian play to be actually presented on the stage. It was given at the Park Theatre, New York 1808 and was called an operatic melodrama when it was advertized.[4] It seems to the reader to be very similar to a Gilbert and Sullivan operetta. According to Moses, Barker had

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1 Halline American Plays page 14

2 Edited by Trent, Erskine, Doren Cambridge History of American Literature page 285

3 Quinn A History of American Drama page 274

4 Wegelin Early American Plays page 19

intended his play to be a serious drama, instead of which it formed the libretto for the music of John Bray of the New York Theatre.

In spite of the fact that Barker wrote in a light vein, he kept close to actual facts of the story as he had intended; for, in the advertisement of the play, it was announced that, "The materials for this dramatic trifle are extracted from The General History of Virginia written by Captain Smith ...; and as close an adherence to historic truth has been preserver as dramatic rules would allow."[1]

The main plot concerns the love story of Pocohontas and John Rolfe, while other themes include the adventures of John Smith and his dramatic rescue by Pocohontas, the intrigues of Powhatan and his Indian priests against the whites, and several minor love stories. All of these elements are woven together by the author into a musical drama in which light comedy touches are ever present. The romantic conclusion is the climax of the love affair between Pocohontas and Rolfe.

Pocohontas is pictured by Barker as a shy, gentle Indian girl with many of the characteristics of the white girl. In her love scenes with Rolfe she is sweet and

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1 Moses Representative American Plays page 571

innocent, entirely lacking in artifices. The Indians in the play, with the exception of a very fierce savage called Miami, jealous suitor of Pocohontas, and possibly Powhatan, are rather unreal and fictitious in type and not at all the possessors of the fierce traits which one would naturally expect in Indians. Smith is presented as a very courageous man, the equal of the Indian in his bravery and Rolfe as a gentlemanly Virginian opposed to the artifices of his own society. It is possible that this play, if presented today would appeal to musical comedy enthusiasts.

Barker's Indian Princess seems to have started to vogue for Indian plays, for after the performance of his play in 1808, there appeared a great many popular Indian dramas. Foremost among the leading playwrights was a Virginian, George Washington Custis, who was the author of several Indian plays. The first of these entitled, The Indian Prophecy was produced in 1827 and concerned an incident told to Custis by Dr. James Craik, a friend of General George Washington. This play contained a twofold appeal, for it combined the national with the native element. The story concerned the relationship between Washington and Menawha, an old Indian chief, who thought Washington divinely protected, since Indian bullets had failed to strike him at

Braddock's Defeat. Prophesising Washington was being spared for some divine duty, Tecumseh ordered that his Indians cease trying to kill him.

The Indian Prophecy, a great success, was followed in 1830 by Pocahontas, another brilliant success and one of the best of all Indian dramas. Written in serious vein, unlike Barker's Pocahontas, Custis showed a serious consideration of the Indian cause, because at one point, Matacorah, an Indian prince, asks a settler,

"If you English so love your own country, why cross the wide sea to deprive the poor Indian of his rude and savage forests?"[1]

Matacorah, suitor of Pocahontas in this play, is similar in some respects to the character, Rolla, of Mr. Barker. Pocahontas, herself, is represented not as the laughing, timid, innocent young girl, but as a woman grown, and choosing the ways of the Christian, because her intelligence directed her to accept more educated and civilized ways. She says in rejecting Matacorah, her fierce Indian suitor, "Matacorah is brave, yet he lacks the best attributes of courage - mercy. Since the light of the Christian doctrine has shone on my before benighted soul, I have learned that mercy is

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1 Quinn Representative American Plays page 173
(1776 - present)

one of the attributes of the Divinity I now adore."[1]

Powhatan, the chief, conspires against the English until in the last act, after the rescue of Smith by Pocahontas Powhatan is pictured as old and with death in sight, longing to see his people free before he dies. At the end, however, he realizes the hopelessness of the situation and so bows to the English. Matacoran, however, is not to be dominated by English ways, and he prefers liberty and freedom in the West to submission. Thus Matacoran is made representative here by the author of the typical savage Indian, although he seems to be the only Indian in the play who is such a creature. Smith is as usual a central figure in the story, his rescue being placed by Custis in the last act. He is represented somewhat in the light of a knight of Pocohontas, who gives him a feather from her plume to wear in his helm. The love story of Pocohontas and Rolfe is here subordinated to the problems of the Indians and the whites, but it appears at the close as a climax to Powhatan's pledge of friendship, for he said of his daughter and Rolfe,

"Let their union be a pledge of future Union between England and Virginia."[2]

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1 Quinn Representative Averican Plays page 175
(1776 - present)

2 Ibid page 192

In all respects Custis' play was a decided improvement in the treatment of the Pocohontas theme. This same author is also said to have written The Pawnee Chief but of this play little is known.

Indian drama received its greatest impetus from Edwin Forrest's remarkable characterization of an Indian hero in Metamora. As has been seen, previously to this the theatre itself had done little in the way of giving the public authentic portrayals of Indians. Now, aided by Custis' encouragement, and with the advent of Forrest, Indian drama received an impetus such as it had never had with the result that the theater took an immediate interest in Indian drama and divers plays appeared depicting every phase of Indian life.

Metamora, presented in 1829, was a prize winning play selected by Forrest from fourteen plays submitted as the best play containing an Indian character for the actor to portray. The play, when presented at the Park Theatre in New York, was an instantaneous success and became one of Forrest's favorite roles. The author was John A. Stone, an actor, whose single success was this drama and who later in life committed suicide because he received no support from the theatre. Stone's Metamora was the result of his reading of earlier Indian

drama. It told the story of Philip the Indian, the leading character.

It is regrettable that this play could have but little literary merit, for the reason that it was written chiefly as a starring vehicle for Forrest and consequently never published. In fact, the play was so written to suit that particular actor's talents, that after his death few actors had the presumption to attempt the role, and as a result, the play might be said to have died with him, living only as a memory to Forrest's ability. What little we have, has been reconstructed from certain of the hero's speeches which remain. The value of the play lies in what it did for the popularizing of the Indian in the theatre, for it prolonged interest in that subject for many years - so much so that according to Quinn, Forrest was still acting in the play to interested audiences in 1887.[1]

The story concerned the last days of Philip and emphasized his love for his wife and child, as well as his remarkable courage and bravery in the face of death. His thoughts concerning the invaders are expressed in a memorable speech, delivered with great eloquence by Forrest. As cited by Reiser, it is as follows,

"The pale faces are around me thicker than the leaves

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1 Quinn History of American Drama page 271

of summer. I chase the hart in the hunting grounds; he leads me to the white man's village. I drive my canoe into the rivers; they are full of white man's ships. I visit the graves of my fathers; they are lost in the white man's cornfields. They come like the waves of the ocean, forever rolling upon the shores. Surge after surge, they dash upon the beach, every foam drop is a white man. They swarm over the lands like the waves in winter; and the red men are dropping like withered leaves."[1]

The final scene of the play, cited by Mayorga, is a heart rending one. It occurs when Philip, who has been informed by his wife, just rescued by him from the whites, that their little son is dead, says the simple words, "Dead! Cold!" Then he sadly kills his wife to prevent her enslavement by his enemies, and at the end, filled with bullets, he dies pathetically, saying, "I die - my wife - my queen - my Nakmeokee."[2]

The Indian, as he was portrayed by Forrest, was a noble creature with all of his ideal traits brought to the fore. Since the role was designed to fit Forrest's capacities, it had, necessarily, to be typed. Nevertheless, it did show the Indian love for nature and his land.

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1 Keiser Indian in American Literature page 78

2 Mayorga History of the American Drama page 98

of the play in general, Margaret Mayorga says in her Short History of American Drama, "It would have been too much to expect John Stone to excel in Indian psychology, much less for Edwin Forrest to interpret it. Nevertheless, Metamora was an earnest endeavor to bring drama from fictional heights to something approaching reality."[1]

Metamora was put on at the Walnut Street Theatre in Philadelphia shortly after a drama entitled William Penn, written by William Penn Smith was presented. This second drama was based on the relations of the Indians with Penn and its background was colonial history.

In 1838 the Pocohontas theme was again introduced by Robert Dale Owen in his play Pocohontas, which was written in blank verse and prose and was produced in New York with Charlotte Cushman as Rolfe and Emma Wheatley as Pocohontas. This drama did not compare with that of Custis because it did not have the dramatic power the latter's did. The story is occasionally boring, the only possible new angle to it being an attempted suggestion of a love motive between John Smith and Pocohontas. This, however, was not very successful.

Owen's play was the result of long preparatory study

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1 Mayorga Short History of American Literature pages 95, 96

of historical material from which he hoped that the reader would gain benefit. He believed that the theme of a race being driven from their homes by the white man was a subject fitted for dramatization. Even himself he listed the deficiencies of his play, for he said that it lacked the deep tragedy and broad humor necessary to the success of a play. Nevertheless, the play does have its good points, the most outstanding one being his Indian characterizations in general, and in particular his portrayal of Pocohontas with her dark expressive features.

A decade later an actress presented her version of the story in a drama entitled The Forest Princess or Two Centuries Ago. This actress was Charlotte Barnes whose interest had become aroused while she watched her mother act in Custis' play. Miss Barnes' work, done in blank verse, omitted entirely the love element and attempted a very realistic account, bringing Pocohontas to England at the end where she died after Smith had been cleared of treason. The play, acted in Philadelphia, in 1848, was fairly popular although of no really great literary merit.

In the later half of the 19th century, Indian drama suffered from the burlesquing pen of John Brougham. The chief cause for this was the oversentimentalizing and ennobling of the Indian on the stage. According to Quinn,

"[illegible] of [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] to [illegible] [illegible] even when the [illegible] is [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] and the [illegible]."[1] These limitations were recognized by Boucicault who wrote the exceedingly popular if short lived burlesque on Poe's best song which he entitled *The Lost of the Lighthouse*, and an *Pocahontas* which he entitled *The Gentle Savage*.

The first in 1847 was written in a sort of rhyming meter and satirized every scene of Poe's drama. For instance, in the final death scene, acted by Mawworm, is representative. Metamora says to his wife,

"My fairest flower, why do you look so sad?"

and is answered,

"Alas, look there! You're no longer a god!"[2]

It is said that Brougham, who in the [illegible] title in his own play was wont to do a great deal of "ad-libbing" which added to the comical billing, and the play was received so well that Brougham attempted to repeat his success in 1848 when he produced his burlesque on *Pocahontas*. This was an even more farcical attempt, but it was accepted with enthusiasm.

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1 Quinn *History of American Drama* page 95

2 Meyorga *Short History of the American Drama* page 154

even to the extent of charming Mr. Tremont's performance of Pocohontas which role he was obliged to assume on one occasion when the leading lady eloped. Brougham's success evidently depended a great deal on his abilities as a comedian, and in this direction he was well gifted.

With the appearance of the burlesque and its tremendous popularity, serious Indian drama left the American stage. It had played its part, and its popularity was now on the wane. After 1880 the appearance of the Indian on the stage was very scarce. Only two mediocre plays of any importance were produced, one in 1881 and the other in 1886. Both of these were based upon already popular writings. The first <u>The Dept of Wish-Ton Wish</u> 1881 was based upon Cooper's novel of the same name. On the whole, it followed the novel, and music played a large part in it. Although as an amusing and humorous piece of work it was produced in a great many theatres, as Weiser puts it, "it is only the faint echo of an improbable and mediocre story."[1]

Along the same line was <u>Hiawatha</u> taken from the well-known poem and written as a musical play. It was produced in 1886 and included many modern items.

Although this account of Indian drama is necessarily a limited one, the reader can readily see the importance

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1 Weiser Indian in American Literature page 96

of Indian drama, especially during the first part of the 19th century. Because this thesis deals particularly with the Eastern Indians, it has been necessary to omit discussions of famous Indian plays from other sections of the country. Such plays as the dramatization of Robert Montgomery Bird's popular Nick of the Woods dealing with the Kentucky Indians and The Arrowmaker telling of the South West Indian, written by Mary Austin would deserve an important place in a general discussion of all Indian drama.

Chapter IX

Cooper--The Immortalizer of the Indians

Under Cooper, the use of the American Indian in American literature reached its peak. His primary interest was in the study of the aboriginal native of America, and it is a recognizable fact, that through Cooper's faithful delineation of him, he reached his rightful and immortal place in American literature.

Cooper was born in September, 1789, the eleventh child of his father, Judge William Cooper and his mother, Elizabeth Fennimore Cooper. He was christened James, later taking the name Fennimore in accordance with his mother's wishes. When Cooper was thirteen months old, he was carried

in his mother's arms to his father's settlement at the fort of Otsego. He was carried there somewhat forcibly, to be sure, for Boynton relates that when Mrs. Cooper refused to go at the last minute, Judge Cooper took her, seated her in her Queen Anne armchair with James in her arms, and set her down in the moving van.[1] The settlement was called Cooperstown.

According to Pattee, it would be a mistake to picture the boyhood of Cooper as spent in a remote settlement amid Indians, for during his early boyhood, Cooperstown contained seventy families and was a town easily accessible from Albany and the Hudson. Authorities are agreed that the only Indians Cooper could have come in contact with were stragglers and roving tribes which still lingered on the outskirts of the settlement. Van Doren, however, calls Cooperstown, "the raw central village of a pioneer settlement -- where the boy learnedto feel the mystery of the dark forest."[2]

It is probably true that the atmosphere was sufficient to stimulate a boy of Cooper's romantic strain to the study of native life. Then too, many remnants of the red man's earlier dominance were to be discovered, the majority of them buried just under the surface of the ground.

1	Boynton	James F. Cooper	pages 14, 15
2	VanDoren	American Novel	page 21

Pieces of pottery, remains of rude implements and bones were among these. It is probable that a great many were turned up every year when the settlers set out to plow their lands. For instance, according to James Fennimore Cooper II, when Susan Cooper's grave was dug a skeleton, thought to be that of an Indian, was found.

Also in Cooper's early boyhood, there were many writings by men who had earlier experienced trouble with the Indians. Among these was, for instance, the case of John Hunnicliffe who wrote in 1798 of the raid of his property by the Indians, and incident which had occurred ten years before.

Although the opportunity of studying the Indian himself was limited to the study of a type which had long since lost his original ferocity, Cooper became thoroughly acquainted with every detail he could find out by observing the native in his home town, as a midshipman in the navy, and later in his extensive travels. This information he supplemented by reading from all authentic sources, until it may be said that he was in command of a large store of knowledge on Indian life. Such a book as <u>An Account of the History, Manners, and Customs of the Indian Natives Who Once Inhabited Pennsylvania and Neighboring States</u> 1819, written by the Reverend John Heckewelder, was invaluable to Cooper's purpose since it described in detail the Delawares

Mohegans, and Iroquois. It is noteworthy that Heckewelder, who preached among the Indians pictured the Mohicans and Delawares in a favorable light, while the Iroquois were described unfavorably.

Cooper's first two productions, Precaution and The Spy, undertaken as an experiment, were published in 1820 and 1821 respectively. Precaution, Cooper himself dismissed as an imitative book, and he set out to redeem himself the following year by writing a book with a native background. The Spy, his next attempt, was a success both here and abroad. The plot was based upon a story Cooper had heard about a Revolutionary spy of Westchester, called by Boynton, "the no man's land of the Revolution."[1] The simple sincerity of the tale with its background of living American regions and traditions overcame any technical faults that may have been made by the author to give it universal appeal. Critics praised Cooper's use of the Indian so highly that Cooper now decided to utilize all material which he had collected on the subject. In his simple introduction to chapter I, Cooper quoted,

"Breathes there a man with soul so dead,
Who never to himself hath said
This is my own, my native land."[2]

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1 Boynton James F. Cooper PAGE 100

2 Cooper Works of James F. Cooper Volume I

Page 22, Ed

of The Spy Van Doren said in his American Novel, "In The Spy American Fiction may be said to come of age."[1]

The Last of the Mohicans appeared in 1826 after Cooper had published The Pioneers, a novel dealing with his father's settlement of the Otsego territory and The Pilot dealing with his own sea adventures. This latter work initiated a series of sea tales which included The Red Rover, written at a later date. The Last of the Mohicans, which may be rightly called Cooper's greatest Indian story, had its inspiration, according to Boynton, when Cooper visited the Lake George country and caverns with some friends, who urged him to write an article about it. His use of the Indian theme in The Pioneers in the persons of Natty Bumppo and Indian John now occurred to Cooper, and this appeared to be the opportune time to re-introduce them to the public. His decision to resume the narrative of these two persons, resulted in a series of books which are known as The Leatherstocking Tales. It is odd enough that although The Pioneers was written first, rightly it belongs last, because in it Natty appears as an old man.

In The Last of the Mohicans, Natty, who is called Hawkeye is pictured at his peak, as the possessor of such nobility and clearness of spirit as would never be found in any other than an inhabitant of nature's haunts.

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1 Van Doren The American Novel pages 23,24

Chingachgook is the character of old Indian John, but here he appears in possession of keenest faculties. Uncas, the last of the Mohicans, is truly an idealized Indian, and it is around him that the romantic thread of the story is woven. Of him Chingachgook says sadly, "I am on the hilltop and must go down into the valley; and when Uncas follows in my footsteps, there will no longer be any of the blood of the Sagamores, for my boy is the last of the Mohicans."[1] He is described by Cooper as, "upright, flexible, graceful and unrestrained in the attitudes and movements of nature, with no concealment in his dark glancing fearless eye--alike terrible and calm, with the bold outlines of his haughty features pure in their native red and together with all, the finest proportions of a noble head, bared to the scalping tuft."[2]

Magua, on the other hand, a Mingo or Iroquois, is a composite of all the tricky, savage, and low qualities which could be found in an Indian. He is pictured as entirely murderous, and in a minute description of his actions at the very beginning of the story, Cooper gives us the essence of all his actions. The description follows:

"His eye alone, which glistened like a fiery star

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1 Cooper Works of James F. Cooper Volume II page 18 column 2

2 ibid page 30 column 2

amid lowering clouds, was to be seen in its state of native wildness. For a single instant, his searching yet wary glance met the wondering look of the other, and then, changing its direction, partly in cunning and partly in disdain, it remained fixed, as if penetrating the distant air."[1]

To say of Cooper, as some critics did,[2] that he pictured the Indian as ideal, is a theory which is not upheld by this thesis, for although it is true that Cooper did idealize Uncas and place in him all the noble qualities an Indian have, he pictured the other side of the Indian character in Magua personally, and more generally in the fighting tribes described throughout the book. Uncas was the exception to the rule, and the example of what Cooper liked to picture the Indian as, with his very best characteristics brought to the fore. That he realized the murdering tendencies of the Indian is shown clearly in his descriptions of the bloody attack on the fort by the Indians. Cooper accepted that trait as one peculiar to Indian character, for Chingachgook himself is unable to refrain from scalping a poor French sentinel. Cooper's sentiments are probably expressed by Hawkeye who says, "'Twould have been a cruel and inhuman act for a white

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1 Cooper Works of James F. Cooper Volume 2 page 7 column 2

2 Reiser Indians in American Literature page 105

skin; but 'tis the gift and nature' of an Indian, and I suppose it should not be denied."[1]

In the introduction to The Last of the Mohicans, Cooper gives in full his opinion of the Indian--the result of his careful study. In describing the Indian he says, "In war he is daring, boastful, cunning, ruthless, self-denying, and self-devoted; in peace, just, generous, hospitable, revengeful, superstitious, modest, and commonly chaste."

Cooper received some criticism for having perpetually favored the Delaware and Mohicans, while he disparaged the Mingoes and Iroquois. This, critics claimed, was the result of his reading the account by the Reverend Heckewelder who did the same thing. It is generally conceded, however, that the Delaware and Mohicans were, on the whole, more friendly to the white, while the Iroquois were known for their savage traits. Taking into consideration that Cooper probably exaggerated these traits to suit his purpose, it is true that he had some basis for his action.

The Prairie, the next in the Leatherstocking series, had its scene laid in the far west, and here Natty appears as twenty years older than in The Pioneers. In this book which belongs to the end of the series, Cooper turned

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1 Cooper Works of James F. Cooper Volume II page 82, col II.

his pen to some magnificent description of the West, and even though he had not as yet seen it, by his tremendous power of imagination, it turned out another masterpiece.

Cooper now turned his attention to a new scene and one untouched by him up to this point. Anxious to try all new sources of material, he sought out New England and the story of King Philip. The result of this was The Wept of Wish-Ton-Wish, which was, according to Pattee, "A failure so notable that it ended the first period of his literary career."[1] Part of his failure is probably due to the way in which he represented the Puritans. Cooper had early become prejudiced against the Puritans because of the teaching of one of his instructors and he had never overcome the feeling.

Keiser in an interesting and biting ridicule of the inconsistencies present says that Cooper thought the title represented the name of an Indian valley while in reality it meant"prairie dog".[2] In time the story goes back ten years previous to the war with King Philip and deals with the kidnapping of Ruth Heathcote by a young savage during an intense Indian raid. Keiser ridicules the fact that the so-called cunning Indian leave under

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1 Pattee The First Century of American Literature page 322

2 Keiser Indian in American Literature page 109

the impression that all have been burned, when in reality the majority all come out unharmed. All attempts to find Ruth, however, are useless and she is not found until ten years later, when during King Philip's war, the small town is again attacked by King Philip and the leader of the Narragansett's who turns out to be Ruth's husband and former captor. Ruth, however, remembers nothing of the past and actually takes pleasure in the barbarous pastime of scalping. The tragic death of the husband concludes the play.

This story shows the usual Indian qualities of bravery and courage, but although undeniably powerful in places, it is undoubtedly a poor piece of work taken as a whole. Cooper had not realized as yet that his ability lay in depicting what he knew most about, the New York Indians and settlement life there.

The next important Indian work which was produced was The Pathfinder 1840, another in the Leatherstocking series. This work is considered one of the most important works of his later life. In this book, together with The Deerslayer 1841, Cooper improved a great deal on his first books in the series.

In The Pathfinder we find the old haunts of the Indians and a love story in the life of Natty Bumppo. Here also

Cooper attempted to bring the ocean into a tale of the forest. In the background are the descriptions of the gorgeous lake regions shadowed by the constant recurrence of the ferocious Mingoes. There is also the thrilling adventure of a blockade. Natty Bumppo is chained to pine his love up, however, for Cooper wished to use this part of the forest and undomesticated Indian. This story has been criticized by some as being too similar to The Last of the Mohicans, but there is enough in the book to provide a considerable interest. It is especially interesting in the showing of the fine native traits which Natty developed by his experiences as a pathfinder.

In the final book of the famous Indian series, The Deerslayer, which is chronologically the first, Cooper depicts Natty as a young man justifiably out of his primitive life as companion to the natives. The reasons given for Natty's decision are that he cannot bear the corrupt life of the settlements and that he believes he can find true honor and sincerity only in nature's virgin forests.

Other varied Indian novels which Cooper produced included Wyandotte 1843, a story of the Indian's character and the attacks by Mingo tribes on the United Band of Major Willoughby in New York; Satanstoe 1845, concerning the Indians' part in Captain Abercrombie's assault on

Ft. Ticonderoga; The Chainbearer, 1784, which compares the loyalty of the Indian to the deceit of certain whites; The Deerskins, which is primarily a story setting forth the economic conditions of new settlements; Aged Susquesus, a portrayal of an eighty year span in the life of an aboriginal; Oak Openings 1848 discusses the problem of the bribery, on the part of both the French and English, to induce the Indians to scalping. These novels, although treating of new themes, do not change or add to any of the basic facts which have been already discussed here. Oak Openings, with the scene laid in Michigan, was the last of Cooper's Indian novels.

In concluding this treatment of Cooper, I stress the fact that he was no idealizer of Indians, but attempted to portray them with truth and faithfulness.. To bear out this statement, I quote Brownell, who, in his American Prose Masters says, "It is extraordinary what a convention his assumed idealization of the Indian has become. I say extraordinary because it is a fact that the so-called 'nobel red man' whom he is supposed to have invented does not exist in his books at all."[1] He goes on to say further, "His Indians are exemplified by Magua, and on the whole, his idea of them is given by Leatherstocking who terms them all 'varmints'"[2]

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1 Brownell American Prose Masters pages 20, 21

2 ibid pages 22, 23

That, on the whole, Cooper's Indians have been generally accepted is agreed to by Keiser, who says, "The general truthfulness of Cooper's Indian portraits has been accepted by posterity and has not been successfully challenged."[1]

Chapter XI

Three New England Poets;--

or a discussion of Bryant, Whittier,

and Longfellow's "Hiawatha."

In the 19th century the Indian found a place in the cultured writing of William Cullen Bryant (1794-1878), John Greenleaf Whittier (1807-1892), and Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1807-1882). Used by Bryant to some extent and more importantly by Longfellow, the Indian appeared, his character softened by the all enveloping magic of poetic imagination and mellowed by time.

Bryant, because of his ever present and deep understanding of humanity, his love for nature, and his outlook on life as a great drama tinged always with melancholy, saw in the departure of a great race, a drama worthy of his creative attention. His Indian poems

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1 Keiser Indian in American Literature page 147

including, "An Indian Girl's Lament", "An Indian Story," "An Indian at the Burial Place of his Father", and "Monument Mountain" are all filled with a certain longing, a melancholy sadness which stamps them as the work of the compassionate author of "Thanatopsis."

"An Indian Girl's Lament" is the song which an Indian maiden sings at the grave of her lover, slain in battle. Speaking in simple language to her lover, she tells him how she has pulled away the shrubs which grew too close to his sleeping head, and broken forest boughs which prevented the sunbeams from falling upon his grave. She then reviews the weary road which led him to his final resting place. She tells him that it is she who has arranged his body for its journey to the distant lands, encased his feet in moccasins, placed his bows and arrows in his hand, crossed his breast with wampum belts, and, after placing food beside him, has finally wrapped him in bison's hide. The Indian custom ofproviding a lovedone with food and money has been faithfully carried out. Thus she feels that she has done all in her power to decorate him as an illustrious warrior should be decorated and knows that he must be happy. Yet in his happiness, she begs him not to forget the sad Indian girl who weeps the hours away, forgetting her grief only in thoughts

of his love.

A happier theme is present in "An Indian Story", in which grief turns to joy when a lost one is returned. Maquon, and Indian brave has set forth to hunt a good red deer as a prize for his dark-haired bride

"With her bright black eyes and long black locks,
And voice like the music of rills."[1]

But when he joyfully returned, he found his bower ravished, and his bride carried off by a ruffian. His grief is short, for he quickly sets off to find his bride, and the result is described in the closing lines:

"And the Indian girls, that pass that way,
Point out the ravisher's grave;
'And how soon to the bower she loved,' they say,
'Returned the maid that was borne away
From Maquon, the fond and the brave.'[2]

A poem similar to "The Indian Maiden's Lament" is "Monument Mountain" which relates the sad legend of an Indian maiden, the fairest and most gay-hearted of all the Indian maids who fell in love with her cousin, an incestuous love according to the moral laws of her tribe.

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1 Bryant, William Poems page 55
2 ibid page 57

Gradually her eye loses its sparkle, her step, its lightness, and she spends her time weeping. Finally she confides in her playmate of childhood that she must die, and later, bedecked in all her ornaments so loved before, she throws herself from the mountain top. Her people buried her upon the mountain's slope, and thenceforth all who passed laid a stone in silence on the pile. Thus comes the end to one hapless Indian maiden because of the customs of her race.

Among the poems which Bryant wrote concerning the sadness of the passing of the whole race are: "An Indian at the Burial Place of his Father", "The Ages," and "The Disinterested Warrior."

The first of these, "The Indian at the Burial Place of his Father" describes an Indian who has come from afar to seek out his father's ancient burial place; but he findsthe spot being plowed by the white men, with their sheep on the slopes around, and their cattle on the meadows. Sorrowfully he says,

"Methinks it were a nobler sight
To see these vales in woods arrayed,
Their summits in the golden light,
Their trunks in grateful shade;
And herds of deer that bounding go

"O'er hills and mountains and trees below."[1]

And foreseeing the white man's final victory,

"And fast they follow, as we go
Toward the setting day--
'Til they shall find the land, and lie
Are driven to the Western Sea!"[2]

But an awful prophecy, similar to the one given by King Philip, follows:

"But I behold a fearful sign
To which the white man's eyes are blind;
Their race may vanish hence like mine,
And leave no trace behind,
Save ruins o'er the regions spread,
And the white stones above the dead."[3]

"The Disinterred Warrior" deals with the same subject as above, with the poet pleading that at least the whites pay reverence to the graves of the former owners of the country. He concludes,

"A noble race but they are gone,
With their old forest wide and deep,

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1 Bryant Poems page 59
2 ibid page 60
3 ibid page 60

And we have built our homes upon
Fields where their generations sleep.
Their fountains slake our thirst at noon,
Upon their fields our harvest waves,
And lovers woo beneath their moon--
Then let us spare, at least, their graves."[1]

"The Ages" is a very long poem in which Bryant discusses at length the disappearance of certain great races from the earth. This was most probably the result of his pondering over the Indian race in particular, for he considers how they have left the Eastern part of the States already, and their former hunting grounds have become cities.

Thus, in Bryant, the Indian theme is one of sadness, of the sadness of passing, for the Indian appealed to Bryant as a subject for poetry, chiefly because of his melancholy attraction. Bryant cared little or nothing about the history of the Indian or his affairs.

John Greenleaf Whittier became interested in the Indian theme early in his career, probably because of the popularity of Indian writing at the time and because of his interest in the Indian tales which he had heard from his parents. Whittier's mother, a native of New Hampshire,

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[1] Bryant Poems page 106

had been familiar with many an Indian raid and often told of her experiences. Whittier's enthusiasm, however, was not sustained, and most of these poems were later relegated by him to the appendix of his works since he was inclined to look at them as "the weak beginnings of the graduate of a small country school."[1] Three of the poems, however, were allowed to remain in his collected works. These were "Pentucket," "Funeral Tree of the Sokokis," and "The Bridal of Pennacook".

Of the poems in the Appendix, I shall make brief mention. "Metacom" was based on the story of King Philip, whom Whittier termed, "the most powerful and sagacious Sachem whoever made war upon the English."[2] It contains, for the most part, talk by Philip concerning the wrong he and his people had been done, and in one place he says,

"Yet, brother, from this awful hour
The dying curse of Metacom
Shall linger with abiding power
Upon the spoilers of my home."[3]

"Mt. Agiochook" concerns the supposition by the Indian

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1 Whittier Complete Poetical Works page 484
2 ibid page 488
3 ibid page 488

that the White Mountains were the residence of powerful spirits, because of which belief they never ascended them. At the close of the poem, Whittier says that now the mountains know the Indian God no more but in his place the God of Christen, and furthermore worshipers climb to the steepest heights.

"Mag Megone," a poem in three parts, according to Whittier was begun in 1830 and was not completed for four years. Dealing with the border strife of Eastern New Englanders with their Indian neighbors, it is mainly fictitious and is at best a labored piece of work.

Among the Indian poems included in the regular volume there are three which Keiser considers the best of Whittier's poems on Indians.

"Pentucket," the first of these, is the story of an attack on Haverhill in 1708 by a combined body of French and Indians. During this raid 16 of the villagers were massacred and a still larger numbered made prisoners. It is interesting to note that Whittier also made a prose summary of the event in a paper entitled "The Border War of 1708."

In "Pentucket" we get Whittier's idea of the savage Indians in particularly vivid lines describing the raid.

"No,--through the trees fierce eyeballs glowed
Dark human forms in moonshine showed
Wild from their native wilderness,
With painted limbs and battle dress.

A yell the dead might wake to hear
Swelled on the night air far and clear;
Then smote the Indian tomahawk
On crashing door and shattering lock;
Then rang the rifle shot, and then
The shrill death-scream of stricken men,--
Sank the red axe in woman's brain
And childhood's cry arose in vain."[1]

"The Bridal of Pennacook" tells of the marriage of Wetamoo, daughter of the Pennacook chief to a cold chief of Saugus, who refused to call for his wife after she had gone to visit her father. The father refused to send her back and the result was the death of Wetamoo when the Merrimac dam burst. In a preface to this poem, Whittier gave the general facts of the story as true and the date of the actual marriage as taking place in 1662 at Concord, New Hampshire, Concord being known as Pennacook. It is probable that Whittier got the material for this poem from his mother who had lived in New Hampshire.

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[1]Whittier — Complete Poetical Works — page 9 column 1

The last of these three poems "Funeral Tree of the Sokokis" was based on the story of Polan, chief of the Sokokis Indians, killed at Sebago Lake in 1756, and buried beneath the roots of a partially uprooted tree, which in springing back to place covered the warrior's grave.

As will be noted by the reader, most of these poems are based on legends or stories which Whittier had heard and they are typical of the way he utilized his material.

It is unfortunate that Whittier did not see fit to continue his work on the Indian, for his poems, although of only fair quality held promise. His rich description of the New England scenery was the best yet seen in poetry and as a background for tales of New England Indians it was unmatchable. However, Whittier evidently found that his chief interest lay in the setting itself, rather than in his subject material, and his poem "Snowbound" is one of the compensations for his loss as a poet of Indian tales.

"Hiawatha," published in 1855 by Henry W. Longfellow (1807-1882), is consideredby many authorities as the best original native American poem; for its native theme, together with its altogether charming metre, makes it a most exquisite piece of work. Of it Theodore Stanton

says, "After many failures, a native poet had at length arisen to portray our aborigines, in a long poem, with fidelity and imagination."[1]

Longfellow based his poem on The Algic Researches of Henry Schoolcraft, a collection of Indian tales and legends. He had become interested in the building of a story around an Indian theme upon the suggestion of a student, who after various readings of colonial accounts of Indian affairs had convinced him that the race had been grossly mistreated by the whites.

It is related by his brother that in 1854 he had hit upon a plan for a poem on the Indian, his purpose being "to weave together the beautiful traditions into a whole."[2] While studying from various sources and endeavoring to form in his mind a clear picture of a legend, Longfellow spent much time in the careful observation of all Indians with whom he came in contact. The Cambridge History mentions especially the spectacle of Black Hawk which he witnessed on the common.[3]

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1 Stanton — Manual of American Literature — page 281

2 Longfellow — Life of Henry W. Longfellow — volume 2 page 182

3 — Cambridge History of American Literature — Volume 1 — Edited by Trent, Erskine, Sherman, Van Doren — Page 112

In addition to this, he also entertained an Ojibway chief in his home. Although the idea for the poem was conceived in 1849, it did not become a complete reality until 1855, when, after five long years of study, intermittent periods of work and varying enthusiasms, Longfellow at last completed the poem and it was published, selling as many as 2000 copies in one day and before four weeks had passed, the mark reached 10,000 in this country alone.

The myth as given in Schoolcraft's book was entitled "Hiawatha" or "Manabozho." Longfellow chose the more euphonious of the two. It was said by Schoolcraft to be one of the most general in the Indian country and the prime legend of their mythology. It was first related to Schoolcraft by the Chippewas of Lake Superior and concerned an Indian youth with marvelous powers, who had been sent down by the Great Spirit as his messenger and prophet. The story as given in Schoolcraft is essentially as follows.

Born of Wenonak, daughter of the wife of the Moon, Manabozho was taken to live with his grandmother when his mother died. The grand mother he called Noko--an abbreviation of Nohomis, meaning grandmother. Becoming curious as to his parentage, the boy learned from his grandmother that his father, The West, hadtaken his

mother without the consent of her parents, and she had died in giving him birth. Filled with hatred, the boy went to kill his father but was dissuaded when his father offered to give him as much power as his brothers, so that he could do good for the people of the earth. There follows the description of Manabozho's many experiences: being swallowed by a fish, the war excursion against the Pearl Feather, his eventual marriage, and adventures with different animals. [1]

Of the character of Manabozho Schoolcraft says, "Manabozho is regarded by the Indians as a divine benefactor and is admired and extolled as the person of strength and wisdom. Yet he presents the paradox of being a mere mortal."[2]

Longfellow, in his version of the poem, followed the old legend closely for the most part, omitting what he chose and adding what he considered it needed. He did this according to Thompson "in order to give his poem wide artistic appeal which he felt to be appropriate to the character of a man, and discarded all those in which he is thought of in animal form-- He used the serious incidents and omitted all those in which

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For entire legend see

1 Schoolcraft Myth of Hiawatha and other Legends pages 1-49

1 ibid page 51

Mamabozho appears as a trickster."[1]

The meter of the poem, Longfellow borrowed from a Finnish epic called Kalevala. The trochaic diameter without rhyme and with much repetition, well suited to the poem, has a limpid, running quality which is suggestive of Indian life and is in fact very much like genuine Indian verse.

Although it is generally thought that Longfellow received several line suggestions from "Kalevala" and Reiser notes several parallel lines,[2] Longfellow does not mention that fact in his notes on the poem. He says in part, "This Indian Edda--if so I may call it-- is founded on a tradition prevalent among North American Indians, of a person of miraculous birth, who was sent among them to teach them the arts of peace."[3] He names Mr. Schoolcraft as his source, and adds, "Into this old tradition I have woven other curious Indian legends drawn chiefly from the various and valuable writings of Mr. Schoolcraft, to whom the literary world is greatly indebted for his indefatigable zeal in rescuing from

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1 Thomson Publication of Modern Language Association of America pages 195, 196

2 See Reiser Indian in American Literature page 118

3 Longfellow Complete Works page 194

oblivion so much of the legendary lore of the Indians."[1]

Keiser finds it unfortunate that Longfellow appropriated from Mr. Schoolcraft a title which he proves erroneous since the two were not at all identical, Hiawatha being a Mohawk prophet statesman and magician flourishing around 1750, and Manabozho a great Algonquin deity. Thus it comes about that Longfellow ascribes the deeds of this man to Hiawatha.[2]

In spite of this, the poem, published in 1855, was received by the public with open arms, its appeal being so great that it was considered almost epic-like in quality. Of it Pattee says, "Atmosphere and melody are everything: moonlight, starlight, romantic love, days that are forgotten, sentiment and pathos."[3]

There is no doubt that Longfellow has done more to immortalize the Indian by this one poem than any other poet before or since. His idyllic picture of unfettered Indian life--Indian life as Americans like to think of it--has become an accepted tradition a poem appealing to children and adults alike. And one has only to listen

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1 Longfellow <u>Complete Works</u> page 194

2 Keiser <u>Indian in American Literature</u> page 198

3 Pattee <u>The First Century of American Literature</u> page 534

to its lilting meter and haunting strain to see the reason for its universal appeal--

By the shores of Gitche Gumee,
By the shining Big-Sea-Water,
Stood the Wigwam of Nokomis,
Daughter of the Moon, Nokomis,
Dark behind it rose the forest,
Rose the black and gloomy pine-trees,
Rose the firs with cones upon them;
Bright before it beat the water,
Beat the clear and sunny water,
Beat the shining Big-Sea-Water.
There the wrinkled old Nokomis
Nursed the little Hiawatha,
Rocked him in his linden cradle,
Bedded soft in moss and rushes,
Safely bound with reindeer sinews;
Stilled his fretful wail by saying,
"Hush! the naked Bear will hear thee!"
Lulled him into slumber, singing
"Ewa-yea! My little owlet!
Who is this, that lights the wigwam?
With his great eye lights the wigwam?
"Ewa-yea! My little owlet!"[1]

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1 Longfellow Complete Poems pages 119, 1920

Chapter XII

Thoreau's Interest in the Native

Perhaps of all American men of letters, the greatest lover of the Indians was Henry David Thoreau (1817-1862), a native of Concord, Massachusetts. Nature in its simplest form appealed to Thoreau, who took no interest in fine manners or dress. Forever searching for a new find on his many walks, Thoreau's greatest delight came when he found an old Indian relic--an arrowhead perhaps, or the corroded remains of an old Indian fireplace. These to him represented the earliest, and most nearly ideal life of America--before taxes were introduced, and men become slaves to fashion.

In a biography of Thoreau, written by Ralph Waldo Emerson and included in Thoreau's Complete Works, Emerson tells us that Indian relics abounded in Concord--in addition to arrowheads--stone chisels, pestles, and fragmentsof pottery were to be found as well as ashes, marking spots the savages had frequented. According to Emerson, "These and every circumstances touching the Indian were important in his eyes. His visits to Maine were chiefly for the love of the Indian. He had the satisfaction of seeing the manufacture of the bark-canoe as well as trying.

his hand in its management of the rapids. He was inquisitive about the making of the stone arrow-head, and in his last days charged a youth setting out for the Rocky Mountains to find an Indian who could tell him that. Occasionally a small party of Penobscot Indians would visit Concord and pitch their tents for a few weeks in summer on the river bank. He failed not to make acquaintance with the best of them; though he well knew that asking questions of Indians islike catechizing beavers and rabbits. In his last visit to Maine he had great satisfaction from Joseph Polis, an interesting Indian of Old town, who was his guide for some weeks."[1]

Thoreau's interest in the Indian dated back to his childhood, when, with his brother, John, he made a hobby of hunting for old Indian relics. Most of these excursions he recorded in his Journal. One one occasion when he was twenty, he was with his brother on one of their walks and make an interesting discovery. He records the start of the trip in his Journal as follows, "With our heads full of the past we went to the mouth of Swamp Bridge Brook." When they arrived there, inspired by the site, Thoreau broke into an extravagant eulogy saying in part, "There was their lodge the rendezvous of the tribe, and yonder,"

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1 Thoreau <u>Complete Works</u> page 21

on Clamshell Hill, their feasting ground. This no doubt was a favorite haunt." He concluded the eulogy by pointing dramatically to the ground and saying, "There is Tahatawan's arrowhead." To his surprise, on lifting the stone, he found a perfectly shaped arrowhead beneath it!. This interesting episode is only one of many recorded carefully in the Journal.

Channing, who has written perhaps the most all-inclusive biography of Thoreau stresses the fact that the naturalist did not do a great deal of reading of works by contemporary novelists, but spent the time when he was not studying nature, reading books by reliable authorities on Indians. Heckewelder and Schoolcraft's books were two of Thoreau' favorite sources of knowledge. Then, too, so as not to limit his knowledge to one particular section of the country, he read books by French authors concerning Southern Indians and in addition read in Latin many of thebooks written by Jesuit missionaries who had traveled through Canada. No labor was too great for him in the work that he loved. While reading the various books, he made a great many excerpts and copied early maps and figures of Indians. In all, his Indian material covered eleven notebooks. This vast undertaking was begun about 1850 and

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1 Thoreau Journal pages, 2, 3

continued until Thoreau's death in 1860.

Thoreau, however, was not a man to depend on his reading, and it was his custom to test his knowledge by actual experience and observation. In this direction he did not limit himself to his home state but traveled extensively through Maine. He traveled westward, however, only to Minnesota, where he went for his health, but he was always eager to hear all he could of Rocky Mountain tribes and the Southwest and Southern Indians.

Most of Thoreau's philosophy on the Indian is included in his biggest productions, Walden, The Maine Woods, and the Journal of which I have already spoken. In these books numerous references to the native appear.

In Walden, Thoreau is continually comparing savage life with the complicated economic life of men. His stay at Walden was an experiment. He wanted to experience an uncomplicated type of existence, living in the simplest of circumstances. It might be said, however, that Thoreau's personal habitswere actually Indianlike. Active and elastic physically from his life in the open, he was not bothered by heat, rain, cold or snow. His diet was spare and of the simples type. His habits had been these when he lived in the town of Concord, but his Walden experience gave him something more. Here he was able

to actually live in seclusion and follow out many of his theories.

In his writings on Walden, Thoreau reveals his attitude toward the Indian and also a thorough knowledge of Indian life. He gives as an example of savage ingenuity the Indian's ability to regulate the wind in his house by means of adjusting a string attached to a mat suspended over a hole in the roof.

Pleading for a return to simple habits, Thoreau contrasts the savage's physical condition with that of civilized man. This does not mean that Thoreau wanted a complete return to savage life. On the contrary, he believed man should take advantage of the improvements of civilization, but he in doing so should not become the tool of his tools. It is not true that Thoreau did not realize the savage had his deficiences. He well knew the fierce side of their natures, but he did consider them human and declared that "Civilized man is simply a more experienced and wiser savage."[1] In an ironic argument for the savage's humanity, he declared that the savage in war was certainly no worse than the white man at war. These arguments were probably given by Thoreau in answer to his contemporaries such as Hawthorne who

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1 Thoreau Journal page 51

considered the Indians beasts.

The Maine Woods is really a journal of Thoreau's experiences when he traveled through those woods with an Indian acting as his guide. As a result these writings are full of references to the redmen. Thoreau describes Oldtown and the Penobscot and later the large wooden crosses which had been used by the Catholic missionaries who came through to the Penobsec. To collect all of these interesting references should prove an interesting piece of work, but it does not belong here. Suffice to say that Thoreau himself had an enjoyable time following up Indian tribes, and living in general the Indian type of life he loved so well. From his Indian guide, Joe Polis, Thoreau gained much interesting information, although he regretted that Joe was sometimes inclined to retreat to the taciturnity peculiar to Indians, at which times, the poet and author could do nothing with him.

Thoreau's use of the Indian is clear enough. Of his love for them, I should say it was based on Thoreau's love for the glory of the past and for the ideal free life he pictured them as once the possessors of; and although he was not so prolific in his poetry as in his prose, his

thoughts of them are well brought out in the following poem which is included in his journal.

Thus, perchance, the Indian hunter,
  Many a lagging year agone
Gliding o'er thy ruffling water,
  Lowly hummed a natural song.

Now the sun's behind the willows.
  Now he gleams along the waves,
Faintly o'er the wearied billows
  Come the spirits of the braves.[1]

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1 Thoreau Journal page 251

Findings and Conclusions

The American Indian plays an important part in American literature. With the introduction of him as a subject for literature, a new and completely American type of writing came into being. Up to this time the settlers of America had depended largely upon the English authors. They had not as yet realized the opportunities that the new land offered. The native provided a theme which was unique and untried and which, being original, naturally proved intensely interesting to other countries as well as America. France's philosophers used the Indian as an exponent of the Rousseauistic theories of ideal life. Even the story of Pocohontas was eagerly seized upon as a new subject for literature. It may be possible that the interest shown by other countries in the American native made potential American authors aware of a tremendous new national note.

The use of the Indian in American literature may be divided into two main categories: the use of him in historical material, and his use as a subject for fiction. The Indian was naturally written about from a historical viewpoint first, because he and his customs and ways of living were of historical value to posterity. The settlers set down as faithfully as they could, the accounts of their first meetings with the natives whose homeland they had invaded. They recorded them both for future historical reference, and to satisfy the curiosity of

the many who were curious about the strange person, called the Indian. In this first category, then, belong the histories of wars with the Indians, the personal accounts of captivities and the descriptions of the manners and customs of the native. Books such as Captain John Mason's History of the Pequot War, Mrs. Mary Rowlandson's Narrative of Captivity and Restoration, and Daniel Denton's Description of New York and Its Inhabitants belong to this phase of writings on Indians.

Gradually the Indian as a fitting hero for novels, drama, and poetry, presented himself to the eager pens of native American authors, looking to utilize native material. We have seen the long list which began with the short stories, dramas, and early poetry to culminate in such works as Cooper's immortal Last of the Mohicans or Longfellow's "Hiawatha." There is no doubt that the Indian had his place and an important one in American fiction.

Comparing the attitudes of the various authors throughout toward the savage, one notices a gradual change in outlook from the Puritan idea of the native as a cruel inhuman savage to a more humanitarian and sympathetic view of him, until finally the original savage seemed to disappear and in his place appeared an idealized redman, a glorified representation of the race, who was to take a permanent place in literature.

In concluding, is there any doubt as to the important part the Indian played in American literature? Can anyone studying the history of our country's literature overlook the

part the Indian played in it? Using only the material which this thesis encompasses, there can be no doubt as to the answer.

If one were to consider for a moment the great part the Indian has played in the literature of the other sections of our country - Helen Hunt Jackson's plea for the Navaho Indian, her gorgeous descriptions of their adobe houses in Ramona ; Edna Ferber's epic use of the Indian in the great western plains in the frontier novel, Cimarron; Bird's discussion of the Kentucky tribes in Nick of the Woods - James Hall's Legends West and Tales of the Border-William Gilmore Simms' Romances of the Border, in particular The Yemassee and William Joseph Snelling's Tales of the Northwest, - one would realize that the work discussed in this thesis encompasses but one small portion of the vast amount of material in which the Indian played an important part in the literature of our country.

DIGEST

In my thesis,"The Use of the American Indian in American Literature in the Eastern States to 1890", I have given a comprehensive view of the Indian as he appears in the Literature of the Eastern section of our country, particularly in the literature of the New England States, Virginia, Pennsylvania and New York, and occasionally with reference to Florida and that part of Canada which had intercourse with New York.I have been obliged to omit a discussion of the Indian as he appeared in the literature of the other sections of our country, because of the necessary limitation of my subject, and because to treat that subject thoroughly would require a whole thesis in itself.

My purpose was to show how important the use of the Indian was in our literature,- in drama, poetry, essay, and novel,- and, by a discussion of important and representative works,to show the ever-increasing use of the theme as our literature became more intensely American. I have endeavored to arrange my material in such order as to show how each subject was developed in each particular branch, with the writers in progressive groups utilizing material presented by earlier ones.

The first chapter deals with the background for the introduction of the Indian, and presents the Indian as master of his native soil. The Indian was not to remain as the master of his destiny for long, however,for the invasion by the whites began and goaded the Indian into a desperate effort to retain his land. With this knowledge as background, I proceeded to the discussion of the first use of the native in literature by the

of the appearance of Pocohontas in the writings of Captain John Smith.

After setting forth the historical facts behind the story of Smith's meeting with Pocohontas, I devoted the second chapter to a discussion of the two versions of the story as seen in Smith's True Relation and later in his General History. Each of these versions differed in the presentation of the fundamental facts of the story of Pocohontas, and I have given a brief description of Smith's personality to account for a possible addition to the story. Then follows a mention of the use of the theme by later writers.

The early histories of Indian affairs began to appear shortly after the first clashes of the Indian and the white man. This thesis shows the beginnings made by the historians during the Pequot and King Philip Wars. It also shows the gradual widening of the scope, to include a more general consideration of Indian wars and affairs. I have considered it important to set forth the attitudes of the historians because it is true that these attitudes entered in the presentation of their material, and because it is interesting to compare one work with another in respect to the outlook of the author.

Under the general classification of writings concerning the captivities, I have discussed the personal accounts by individuals who had been victims of Indian raids and lived to write of their experiences. These accounts proved to be important because by a study of them, one gets a clear picture of what people were experiencing at that time as well as information about the customs

of the natives of the country in its primitive state. The value of these personal versions is not a matter for conjecture but an established fact.

I have introduced the use of the Indian in fiction by a description of the works of Philip Freneau, whose poetry is the first to deal importantly with the native theme. Early influences on the poet's life, and his acceptance of a type of Rousseauistic philosophy may be partly credited with the eagerness with which Freneau turned to the portrayal of the native in his forest haunts. His treatment of the Indian in poetry may be seen in the poems discussed in this chapter.

Further use of the Indian in fiction is shown in the early short stories which appeared, among which "The History of Maria Kittle"is discussed in Chapter V. The gradual improvement in story writing, and the continued use of the Indian as a subject showed that the early novelists were awakening to the opportunities which their own country offered in original material. Charles Brockdon Brown's use of the savage in Edgar Huntley is an indication of the Indian's future place in the novel. Hobomok and "Yamoyden" are likewise examples of how American authors were beginning to seize eagerly upon native material which presented itself.

Before presenting a discussion of Paulding's portrayal of the Indian in Koningsmarke, I devoted a good deal of chapter VII to a discussion of the background with which Paulding was familiar, for it was with the relations of the Indians and the whites on the Delaware that Paulding dealt. Reference to William Penn's

writings is also valuable to a reader wishing a full picture of the background which Paulding utilized.

With the advent of Washington Irving, we have the first trace of the Indian's gradual retreat to idealization in American Literature, for Irving's study of Indian life resulted in a portrayal of the Indian which was tinged by the author's geniality and sympathetic understanding. Thus the two essays, "Traits of Indian Character" and "Philip of Pokanoket" actually represent the more tolerant attitude with which the Indian was henceforth to be portrayed.

The use of the Indian in drama I have discussed under that general title in order to preserve the continuity and to trace the gradual development and final decline of Indian Drama. Beginning with the first of these dramas in 1764, I have placed all Indian plays in two general categories,- plays about the Indian Wars and heros, and plays concerning Pocohontas. Then taking each of the dramas chronologically, I have discussed the importance of each, and the extent to which the Indian theme has been developed. There has also been included here an Indian song of uncertain origin,"Son of Alknomook", which appeared in Tyler's Contrast and illustrated the peak of popular demand for Indian material in plays. The final decline of Indian Drama because of the burlesquing of the subject concludes this chapter.

As would naturally be expected, Cooper's use of the Indian in his many novels has been treated to some extent in this thesis, because to most persons' minds, including my own, Cooper is generally thought of as the great immortalizer of the redman in the field of novel writing. Certainly, for the Eastern section

of the country, at least, he is entitled to that consideration. In my discussion of Cooper, I have set forth the facts of his life, his background, and his reading as they are related to his use of the Indian in his works. The fact has been stressed here, by use of concrete examples, that Cooper did not limit himself to the portrayal of one side of the Indian's character, but, on the other hand, gave a faithful and true picture of his entire make-up.

In the concluding chapters of this thesis, I have given consideration to three of our famous 19th century poets and one prose writer,- namely, Bryant, Whittier, Longfellow, and Thoreau. Bryant's use of the Indian has been illustrated by a discussion of his most popular poems, poems which showed his interest in the native to be one of the melancholy of passing, rather than an historical interest. Whittier,on the other hand, early became interested in the Indian from the historical point of view and wrote poems based on historical facts. To illustrate the climax of the use of the Indian in poetry, I have chosen "Hiawatha". In order to give this poem, called by many, the first original American poem and epic, I have discussed it at length in respect to source, plan, meter, story, and general treatment by Longfellow.

The las t chapter deals with Thoreau, the one outstanding lover of the Indian not yet mentioned, whose collected material on the subject of the Indian covered eleven notebooks- a gigantic task, and the result of Thoreau's untiring labor in the field he lo ved. His numerous references to the Indian in his prose works is also discussed here, as well as his personal attitude toward the race.

In concluding, I asserted that the Indian plays an important part in American Literature. He is treated in all types of that literature and from every attitude. In earlier days he was depicted brutally in historical recordings. As time passed, and as he, himself was pushed further back to the western sea, his character became softened by intervening time, and people were inclined to look sympathetically upon him and grant him immortality, at least, in the literature of the country that had been his. In any case, his important use as an original theme in American Literature cannot be denied.

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